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CONTAINING

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## CONTENTS.

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE—	PAGE
SERMON UPON JOHN xviii. 11, . . . . .	3
„ „ LUKE xxiii. 34, . . . . .	14
„ „ JOHN xix. 30, . . . . .	29
„ „ ECCLESIASTES vii. 29, . . . . .	49
„ „ ECCLESIASTES xii. 7, . . . . .	61
SERMONS UPON REVELATION i. 5, 6, . . . . .	80
„ „ LEVITICUS xix. 17, . . . . .	107
„ „ 1 CORINTHIANS xv. 19, . . . . .	123
SERMON UPON ROMANS ii. 7, . . . . .	145
„ „ 2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 14, . . . . .	156
SERMONS UPON EPHESIANS v. 1-27—	
Sermon I. “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children,” . . . . .	169
II. “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour,” . . . . .	179
III. “But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints,” . . . . .	189
IV. “Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks,” . . . . .	199
V. “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God,” . . . . .	209

SERMONS UPON EPHESIANS v. 1-27—*continued.*

Sermon VI. "Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,"	220
VII. "Be not ye therefore partakers with them,"	232
VIII. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord : walk as children of light,"	244
IX. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth,"	257
X. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, and truth,"	268
XI. "Goodness, righteousness, and truth,"	278
XII. "Proving what is acceptable to the Lord,"	288
XIII. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,"	300
XIV. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret,"	310
XV. "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light ; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light,"	319
XVI. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,"	329
XVII. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,"	338
XVIII. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,"	347
XIX. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,"	358
XX. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,"	367
XXI. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understand- ing what the will of the Lord is,"	378
XXII. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess ; but be filled with the Spirit,"	389
XXIII. "But be filled with the Spirit,"	398



SERMONS UPON EPHESIANS v. 1-27—*continued.*

Sermon XXIV. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord," . . . . .	408
XXV. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," . . . . .	417
XXVI. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God," . . . . .	427
XXVII. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord," . . . . .	436
XXVIII. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body," . . . . .	446
XXIX. "Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything," . . . . .	457
XXX. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," . . . . .	468
XXXI. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word," . . . . .	477
XXXII. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish," . . . . .	486

---

408	XXVII. "Giving thanks for all things into the Lord."
417	XXVI. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ."
427	XXV. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."
436	XXIV. "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the church."
446	XXIII. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word."
455	XXII. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."



SERMONS  
ON  
SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.





## SERMON UPON JOHN XVIII. 11.

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*The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

JOHN XVIII. 11.

THESE words are part of Christ's rebuke to Peter, who, when the high priest's servants came to attack Christ, draweth his sword, and cuts off Malchus' ear, which our Lord first healeth, and then reproveth his disciple for this temerarious action: 'Put up thy sword into the sheath.' He reproveth him, partly because it becometh no private man by opposition to resist authority; but the chief reason was, our Lord would not be hindered in performing the great act of his mediation, his dying for sinners. You shall see in another place, when Peter counselled him against his sufferings, he rebuked him with the same severity that he doth the devil tempting him to idolatry: 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat. xvi. 23, compared with Mat. iv. 10. And here this rash and unseasonable interposition, to save his master by force, is again reprov'd. In Peter's temerity, take notice of the difference between military valour and christian fortitude. He that faltered and was blown down by the weak blast of a damsel's question hath now the courage with a single sword to venture upon an whole band of men. Military valour is boisterous, and dependeth upon the heat of blood and spirits, and is better for a sudden onset than a deliberate trial; but christian fortitude dependeth on the strength of faith, and lieth in a meek subjection to God, and will enable us to endure the greatest torments rather than encroach upon the conscience of our duty to God. A man of a military forward spirit may outbrave dangers when they are sudden, but faileth or fainteth in weaker trials, that are managed rather in a way of charge and accusation than force. But in Christ's rebuke, take notice of his obedience to God and love to men. Obedience to God: Shall I not suffer patiently, without resisting, what my Father hath determined me to suffer? And love to men; it was the cup which God had given him to drink for the good of his people, and therefore he would by no means decline it.

In the words take notice of—(1.) The notion by which affliction is expressed; it is 'a cup.' (2.) God's ordering of it, 'Which my Father hath given me.' (3.) Christ's submission, 'Shall I not drink it?'

1. For the term or notion whereby Christ's sufferings are expressed, 'a cup.' We read of a threefold cup in scripture—(1.) A cup of tri-

bulation; (2.) A cup of consolation; (3.) A cup of salvation and thanksgiving.

The first of these is often mentioned: Ps. xi. 6, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup.' So the prophet Jeremiah is bidden, chap. xxv. 15, 'Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it.' So Ps. lxxv. 8, 'For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture: and he poureth out the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.' Thus God's dispensations are ordinarily expressed by a cup poured out and given to men to drink. And therefore our Lord Christ himself useth this form of speech, not only here, but elsewhere; as Mat. xxvi. 39, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' It was a dreadful cup that he was to drink of.

The second cup, the cup of consolation, is spoken of Jer. xvi. 7, 'Neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother;' taken from the Jewish custom of sending it to them that mourned, or to condemned persons. The same is spoken of Prov. xxxi. 6, 7, 'Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts; let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more;' Amos ii. 8, 'They drank the wine of the condemned.'

The third was the cup of salvation, spoken of Ps. cxvi. 13, 'I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.' Or the cup of deliverance, used more solemnly in the temple by the priests, or more privately in the family. Sometimes called the drink-offering of praise; and to which the 'cup of blessing,' 1 Cor. x. 16, used in the Lord's supper, hath a great respect; for it was always used with certain expressions of commemoration and praise. The first is plainly here intended, the cup of tribulation, so called because our afflictions are measured out by God, both for quantity and quality, either by his justice or by his wisdom and mercy.

2. God's ordering of it, 'Which my Father hath given me.' Christ mentioneth not the malice of his enemies, but the will of God and his Father. His hand in Christ's sufferings is often asserted in scripture: Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him; he hath put him to grief;' Acts ii. 23, 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;' Acts iv. 28, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' God did not excite and instigate those wicked wretches to that cruelty which they exercised upon Christ, yet it was predetermined by God for the salvation of mankind.

3. Christ's submission, 'Shall I not drink it?' If God put a bitter cup into our hands, we must not refuse it, for here we have Christ's example. The meaning is, this bitter passion which the Father hath laid upon me, shall I not suffer it patiently?

*Doct.* That it is the duty of christians patiently to suffer whatever God hath appointed them to suffer.

The note is plain. I shall discuss it in this method—



1. That in all calamities we should look to God.
2. That it is a great advantage to patience when we can consider him not as an angry judge, but as a gracious father.
3. That it well becometh his people to endure that willingly which he calleth them unto.

I. That in all calamities we should look unto God: Ps. xxxix. 9, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.' That is the first thing that quieteth the heart, when we see God's hand in all things that befall us. So Hezekiah: Isa. xxxviii. 15, 'What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.' If God hath done it, it is time to cease, and say no more; for why should we contend with the Lord? We murmur and repine if we look no higher than second causes; but owning God's hand, we have nothing to reply by way of murmuring or expostulations. So Job, chap. i. 21, 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' He doth not say, *Dominus dedit, diabolus abstulit*—The Lord hath given, and the devil hath taken away; nor yet, *ὁ Χαλδαῖος ἀφείλετο*, the Chaldean or Sabeian hath taken away; but he owneth God in the providence. Compare the different carriage of David when Nabal slighted him and when Shimei railed on him. The one you have 1 Sam. xxv. 21, 22, 'Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him; but he hath requited me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertaineth to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.' A rash speech, because he only reflected upon the unkindness of Nabal, and meditateth nothing but revenge. The other you have 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 'Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.' David then considered not the instrument, but the supreme author; he looked not to the stone, but the hand that flung it, to God's providence, who thought good by that means to chastise him. If we mind providence rather than revenge, we must not reflect on the injury done to us, nor the malice of our adversaries, but the will and good pleasure of God. So Joseph: Gen. i. 20, 'As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good.' So he calmeth his heart, and fortieth it against all thoughts of revenge against his brethren. In short, there are two sorts of evils and afflictions, such as come immediately from the hand of God, or such injuries and afflictions wherein men are the instruments. Patience hath to do with both, that we may bear afflictions from God without murmuring, and injuries from men without thought of revenge. Such as come immediately from the hand of God are not to be looked upon as chances or casual accidents, but the Lord is to be owned in them, and then we must 'humble ourselves under his mighty hand,' 1 Peter v. 6. In injuries from men, we must consider they are also governed by God's providence, and sent by God as well as other evils. Some are patient under an affliction from God, but very impatient under injurious dealing from men; as when a shower of rain falleth from heaven, we bear it quietly, but if one throw a basin of water upon us, we storm, and are vexed at heart. But if we did look through the wrongs of men to God, they would not be so irksome to us, be they injuries in civil commerce,

such as oppression, detention of dues, contumelies, reproaches, or persecution for righteousness' sake ; see God in all, that you may not fret at it.

Two things we must lay down briefly—

1. That nothing falleth out without God's particular providence : Lam. iii. 37, 38, ' Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not ? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good ; ' that is, nothing is done here below but by a divine disposal and providence, nothing but what he by his secret wisdom hath pre-ordained and appointed.

2. That cross issues and punishments, as well as benefits and prosperous successes, come all of God : Isa. xlv. 7, ' I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil : I, the Lord, do all these things. ' All evils of punishment come from God, as well as the blessings of providence ; and without this principle we could neither be thankful for the one nor humble under the other. We look upon it as a piece of atheism and irreligiousness if we be not thankful for benefits ; it is as great an evil if we be not humble under punishments. We count him a profane man that should thank his dungcart for his good crop ; and doth not he as much deny providence that in all his afflictions looketh only to instruments, and not to the hand of God ? that rageth against men, but doth not take notice of the will of his heavenly Father ? It is very notable, Jonah iv. 6, 7, that God first prepared a gourd to shelter Jonah from the scorching heat of the sun, and then prepared a worm that smote the gourd, and deprived him of that comfort and benefit. He that gave us the delight in any natural comfort doth also take it from us. The same hand must be owned in giving and taking, or else we shall not prevent atheism. He that created the gourd created the worm ; and he that governed the gourd, and made it a refreshing shadow from the heat of the sun, he governed the worm to eat out the root and life of the gourd. As Christ here saith, not the Jews or pharisees provided this bitter cup for him, but the Father. Œcumenius, an ancient Greek writer on the scripture, in his comment on the Acts of the Apostles, telleth us that once a great plague invaded the city of Athens, and miserably desolated it, which also other histories testify ; the citizens being almost consumed, ran to the image of Jupiter with sacrifices, vows, and prayers, to save them from the pestilence, but Jupiter could not do it ; then to Saturn, Mercury, Neptune, and other gods, but still in vain, for the plague daily increased, and was more mortal and deadly. And when this was considered in the court of the Areopagites, a wise man among them said, Without doubt these gods known to us did not send this pestilence, because upon our prayers and supplications to them they cannot take it away ; there may be some other god unknown to us who sent it, and who alone can cause it to cease, therefore he is to be sought unto, an altar erected to him, and sacrifices and intercessions offered to him, to take away this plague from us. And this writer thinketh that this was the original of that altar which Paul saw with this inscription, ' To the unknown God, ' Acts xvii. 23. I have brought this account to show you that all evil is sent by God, and his hand must be acknowledged in it, or else religion will fall to the ground. When the disciples were terrified



in a great storm, Christ cometh walking upon the waters, and telleth them, 'Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid,' Mark vi. 50. They thought it was a spectre, but Christ saith, 'It is I.' In short, the author of all the annoyances and afflictions that befalleth us in this life is God, their end is repentance, their cause is sin; and this well thought of will silence all our murmurings.

II. That it is a great advantage to patience when we can consider him not as an angry judge, but as a gracious father. The cup which Christ drank off was very bitter, and yet he saith, 'The cup which my Father hath given me.' Now every one cannot apply this comfort, for many are not so much as in a visible relation to God, and others that visibly live in his family yet are not owned and acknowledged by him as his dear children, rather counted bastards than sons, as the apostle speaketh, Heb. xii. 7, 8, 'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.' Not legitimate, but degenerate children. Others have a special relation to God, such as is between father and children: 2 Cor. vi. 18, 'I will be unto you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' These have an interest in his dearest love, and a right to his choicest benefits; and they shall know it by his fatherly dealing with them. Now to such this comfort properly belongeth; for though God may punish and afflict others, yet he cannot be said to chastise them as a father, but as an angry judge he doth punish them for their offences and rebellions. Therefore, if you would apply this comfort, you must clear up your interest, enter into covenant with him, and sincerely believe in Christ, and devote yourselves to him, that he may be your God and Father. But because being and seeing are two things, and many that are the children of God may not know themselves to be so, therefore I shall—  
(1.) State this matter; (2.) Show what an advantage it is to patience.

First, I shall state this matter in these considerations—

1. God is a father by creation or adoption.

[1.] In a more general respect by creation, as Adam is called 'the son of God,' Luke iii. 38. So Mal. ii. 10, 'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' God is more our Father than our natural parents are; they concur to our beings but instrumentally, but God originally. It is God that formeth us in the womb; we are his workmanship, not our parents', both as to body and soul. As to the body: Ps. cxix. 73, 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.' They know not whether the child be male or female, beautiful or deformed; they cannot tell the number of the bones, muscles, veins, and arteries, which God hath framed in such a curious and exact order. But for the soul, which is the better part of man, that is of his immediate creation; therefore God is called, 'The Father of spirits,' Heb. xii. 9. They do not run in the channel of carnal generation or fleshly descent. In this general sense, by virtue of creation, God is the Father of all men, good and bad; which though it give God a title to our love, service, and honour, yet it giveth us no interest in his special benefits, or the fruits of his fatherly love; it moveth God not to stir up all his wrath against them, yet not to bestow saving grace, his favour and image, upon them.

[2.] More especially, and in a more comfortable sense, there is a more peculiar sort of men to whom God is a Father by adoption, and they are his dear children. This title is not by nature, but by grace; the foundation of it was laid in the election of God: Eph. i. 5, 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.' But before this decree could be executed and take place, the redemption of Christ was necessary; for we read, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' Sin needed to be expiated by the Son of God in our nature before God would bestow this honour upon any of mankind; Christ was to take a mother upon earth, that we might have a Father in heaven: 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,' Heb. ii. 14, 15. And besides, this grace is applied to us by the Spirit, who by his effectual operation bringeth us into a state of love and sonship. As a Father by creation, he giveth us our natural endowments; as a Father by adoption, he giveth us the supernatural grace of the Spirit, to sanctify and change our hearts; for regeneration and adoption always go together: John i. 12, 13, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And by the new nature put into us we are brought into this new state and relation: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' The soul that was shy of God then inclineth to him as our Lord, that we may honour, love, and obey him, and as our happiness, that we may seek after him, and live in communion with him. And lastly, the act on our part, that we may be received into the number of God's children, is an owning and acknowledging Christ to all the ends and purposes for which God hath appointed him; if we really entertain him as sent by God to be our Lord and Saviour, we are advanced to this dignity: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' This of the privilege.

2. You having received this grace, it is your duty to get it evidenced, that you may maintain a comfortable sense of your adoption. It is evidenced by the dwelling and working of the Holy Spirit in you: Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' He witnesseth objectively and effectively, *per modum argumenti*, and *per modum efficientis causæ*—by way of argument, and by way of causal efficiency. Objectively, if I have the Spirit of God framing my heart to love, and honour, and fear, and obey him, and delight in communion with him, surely I am a child of God; for where these are, sincere love to God prevaieth: 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' There he speaketh of love to God, and so for



honour ; it is else but an empty title : Mal. i. 6, ' If I then be a father, where is mine honour ? If I be a master, where is my fear ? ' So for fear or childlike reverence, that we dare not offend him : Ps. ciii. 13, ' As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' His children, and those that fear him, are equivalent expressions : 1 Peter i. 17, ' If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' I illustrate by that, Jer. xxxv. 6, ' And they said, We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons, for ever.' So for obedience : 1 Peter i. 14, ' As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance ; ' Eph. v. 1, ' Be ye followers of God, as dear children.' So for delighting in communion with him : Rom. viii. 15, ' For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father ; ' Gal. iv. 6, ' And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' This is most felt in prayer : Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplications ; ' Rom. viii. 26, ' Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered ; ' Jude 20, ' But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.' Here we have the nearest familiarity with God whilst we dwell in the flesh, and our souls are carried to God as light bodies move upward. This is the matter of the evidence, but the Spirit giveth a sight or sense of this ; if he be not grieved and ill-treated, but his sanctifying motions be obeyed, he sheddeth abroad the love of God in our hearts, and filleth us with much joy and peace.

3. If this be faithfully done, and there be no other reason to break our confidence, the bare affliction, or the greatness and grievousness of your afflictions, should not ; for these sharp afflictions are not only consistent with this relation, as the instance of Christ showeth, but also it is an act of his fatherly love and discipline. The exhortation speaketh to us as children : Heb. xii. 5-8, ' Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.' God's children must look to be chastened ; neither must our Father's hand be slighted, nor must we faint under it. It is an act of love and kindness to us, that he will not suffer us to go on in our sins. God seemeth to cast off them whom he leaveth to their own hearts' lusts : Hosea iv. 17, ' Ephraim is joined to idols ; let him alone.' But he loveth whom he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. The rod of correction will not wholly be laid aside while God's children are in the flesh. In heaven, where there are no dangers, there is no use of it any more, because then we are

fully and perfectly sanctified, but here you must be content to submit to the discipline of the family. Certainly you must not question his love because something falleth out contrary to your desires. God is a Father when he frowneth and when he smileth; he is the God of the valleys as well as of the hills and mountains; his love doth not alter with our condition, the comfort of adoption is for such a time.

4. Because of our imperfection both in holiness and comfort, we must submit to the authority of a father, when we cannot see our interest in his special fatherly love. Alas! most are so ill settled in the peace and comfort of the gospel, that every notable affliction reviveth our guilty fears; as the Sareptan said to Elijah when her child died, 'Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' 1 Kings xvii. 18. She looked upon that sad providence as a judgment for her sins; so it is if God awakeneth in us a spirit of bondage. Besides, there is none of us but may justify God, that he is not needlessly severe; yea, some have so sinned, that though they be not *fili i ræ*, children of wrath, yet they are *fili sub ira*, children under wrath; though they need no regeneration or conversion, yet they have grieved the good Spirit of God by walking inordinately, therefore their business is to submit to the authority of God, justly correcting and punishing them for sins: Micah vii. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' And by unfeigned repentance to renew their claim, and promise greater loyalty and fidelity for the future: Jer. iii. 19, 'Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not turn away from me.' They must get their wounds healed, make up the breach between God and them, sue out their pardon in the name of Christ, and get a renewed grant of it, and a sense of their adoption.

5. If hitherto you have been quite strangers to God, such providences may be an occasion to begin the relation before they are over, as they are helps to repentance and recovery. Upon the serious working of your souls, the Lord may be found as a father, and admit you into his family. It is said, 'The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth,' Heb. xii. 6. There is a twofold love in God—the love of benevolence, and the love of complacency; the one while we are sinners, the other after he hath made us amiable. Some God chooseth in the fire or furnace of affliction: Isa. xlviii. 10, 'Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.' The hot furnace is God's workhouse; the most excellent vessels of honour are formed there; Manasseh, Paul, the jailer in the Acts; when the prodigal began to be in want, he thought of returning to his father, Luke xv. 17–19. If our ears be opened to discipline, we can own God in the humbling, though not the comfortable way: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' Many that were never serious before are brought to bethink themselves in their afflictions: 1 Kings viii. 47, 48, 'Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplications unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul.' The doors of God's family



are always open to believing penitents, and it is a fatherly providence at last.

Secondly, What an advantage is it to patience and submission to God.

1. God's fatherly relation sheweth his love to us ; and so we know that by all his chastisements he doth but seek our spiritual and eternal good : Heb. xii. 9, 10, ' We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live ? for they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Children, though they take it ill to be beaten by others, yet they take it patiently when beaten for their faults by their parents, who, under God, are the cause of their being and maintenance, and ever in correcting seek their good ; much more should we submit to our heavenly Father. Earthly parents may err, wanting wisdom, or being blinded with passion, and so their chastisements are arbitrary and irregular ; but there is more of compassion than passion in God's rod ; all cometh from purest love, and is regulated by perfect wisdom, and tendeth to the highest end, even our holiness and happiness.

2. It inferreth great love from us to God again. No owning of God is allowed but the practical owning of him ; and therefore none own God as a father but those that love him as a father. Now love God once, and nothing that he doth will be grievous to us ; for as love sweeteneth duties, so it sweeteneth providences. It cometh from my Father ; that doth not only bespeak reverence or submission (Num. xii. 14, ' If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?') but welcome ; anything should be well taken at his hand.

III. It well becometh his people to endure willingly whatever God calleth them unto.

1. From God. His sovereignty and power ; he is too great to be questioned : Job ix. 12, ' Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him ? Who will say unto him, What doest thou ?' His justice ; he is too just to do us wrong : Job xxxiv. 23, ' For he will not lay upon man more than is right, that he should enter into judgment with God.' There is guilt enough in every one to silence us : Ps. cxix. 137, ' Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.' His goodness ; he is too good to do us harm ; he knoweth how to recompense us : Ps. cxix. 71, ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Nothing but good can come from him who is goodness and love itself. His wisdom and faithfulness ; he will afflict us no more than need requireth, or will exceed our strength : 1 Peter i. 6, ' Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ;' 1 Cor. x. 13, ' There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'

2. With respect to Christ, whose example should be of force to us both for suffering and patience in suffering. For suffering, there is a certain measure of affliction fitted and prepared for Christ and all his

followers; the bitter cup goeth round from hand to hand; the whole wave dashed upon Christ, some drops light upon us: Col. i. 24, 'Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church.' And for patience in suffering: Heb. xii. 2, 3, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds;' 1 Peter ii. 21, 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps;' and ver. 23, 'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' He hath trod the way before us, and his steps drop fatness: Mat. xx. 23, 'Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.' There are two things; if any would be nearer in dignity to Christ than others, it is not in reigning, but in suffering with Christ, in drinking Christ's cup; but for preferment in another world, and to have a larger measure of honour, that is given to those for whom it is appointed. We are to prepare for the cross. The other is, the new covenant engageth us hereunto, for there is an allusion to the sacraments. Therefore Christ useth these notions.

*Use 1.* Showeth what provision the christian religion maketh for patience: Rom. xv. 4, 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.' This patience and comfort of the scriptures is a higher thing than what is learnt by the institutions of philosophy. *Tam in ipsis falsa erat patientia, quam et falsa sapientia*—Cyp. Both their patience and their wisdom is false. The grounds of patience from the christian religion are particular providence, adoption, the example of Christ, the assistance of the Spirit, the desert of sin, the fruit of afflictions, both as to the refining of grace and preparing us for glory: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.'

*Use 2.* To exhort us to bear whatsoever God shall lay upon us.

1. Seek this grace of God, both the wisdom and the power to calm the spirit: Col. i. 11, 'Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;' James i. 5, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.' Man's strength is not the strength of bulls; it doth not lie in brutish force, but strength of reason. Our own reason is too feeble to encounter our passions if not assisted by grace; they are not healed by time, but spiritual wisdom: Ps. xciv. 19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.'

2. Expostulate with yourselves, and cite all your passions before the tribunal of reason: Ps. xlii. 5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul?



why art thou disquieted within me?' God puts Jonah to the question: chap. iv. 4, 'Dost thou well to be angry?' So should we argue with ourselves: With whom are you displeased? Is it with God? He doth what he pleaseth; he might cast thee into hell, and art thou angry because of his temporal chastisement? He hath bestowed many mercies upon thee, and shall he not take his seasons to chastise thee? Art thou angry with man? But is not God's hand in it? Hast not thou done so to others? Eccles. vii. 22, 'For oftentimes also thy own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.'

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## SERMON UPON LUKE XXIII. 34.

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*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*—LUKE xxiii. 34.

THE words of the dying are wont to be much observed. When men depart out of the body, they are usually more serious and divine, and speak with greater weight. As a man that is to take a journey trusseth up his bundle or fardle, so when men are to take a journey to God, and are upon the brink of the everlasting state, they are wont to gather up whatever is of a divine and immortal nature. Especially the speeches of the godly dying are to be regarded, who, having laid aside worldly affairs and earthly thoughts, are wholly exercised in the contemplation of heavenly things. Therefore in scripture we read of David's last words, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, and of Joshua, chap. xxiii. 14, 'And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth;' but before he goes he would leave this testimony for God: 'Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' So Jacob, Moses, Simeon: Luke ii. 29, 30, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Paul: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' Now certainly, if any man's dying speeches are to be observed, Christ's are much more. Job said, chap. xix. 23, 24, 'Oh, that my words were now written! oh, that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!' It were well if Christ's words were written, not in cedar, but in our own hearts. They reckon seven short speeches of Christ upon the cross, and this is the first; when he begins to break off his silence, it is to pray for his persecutors: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' In which words there is—

1. Christ's request, 'Father, forgive them.'

2. The argument by which it is enforced, 'For they know not what they do.'

I. Christ's request, 'Father, forgive them.' 'Father' is a word of confidence towards God and of love to his enemies; he mentioneth the sweetest relation. 'Father' is a word of blandishment, as children, when they would obtain anything at their parent's hands, cry, Father!



Some observe that when he speaketh of his own desertion he crieth, 'My God ! my God !' but now, when he prayeth for the pardon of his enemies, he useth a more endearing relation, 'Father.' But the observation is fond and nice ; for Christ in his own case useth the same endearing title : Mat. xxvi. 39, 'O my Father ! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ;' and there is a special reason why in his desertion he should say, 'My God ! my God !' as suiting the title to his case, Eli ! Eli ! my strong one ! my strong one ! He wanted the strong support and the sensible consolations of his godhead. It is most comfortable to observe how Christ upon the cross calleth God 'Father.' He felt him a judge, and believeth him a father. The special work of faith in afflictions is to maintain the comfort of adoption : Heb. xii. 5, 'Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.' Those that are under chastening may be sons. God doth not always put on the person of a judge when he taketh the rod in his hand ; the change of your condition doth not alter, nor make void your interest. God is the God of the valleys as well as the God of the hills. Christ was now, as a man, forsaken and rejected of God, left to the assaults of Satan and scorns of men ; and yet in the height of his pains and passion he retaineth his confidence : 'Father, forgive them.' The whole world is not worth the comfort that is wrapped up in that one word, 'Father.' It is a great folly in the children of God to question his love merely because of the greatness of their afflictions. We presently cry out, as Job, chap. xxx. 21, 'Thou art become cruel to me ; with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me ;' that he hath put off all fatherly affection, because we judge of the cross according to the sense of our own flesh. And therefore, merely to question God's love because of afflictions is folly. Rather we may conclude the contrary of the two. Bastards are left to a looser discipline than sons ; the bramble of the wilderness is suffered to grow and spread when the vine is cut, and pruned, and pared ; the stones that are to be set in the building are most hewed and squared, others lie neglected in the quarry and are left to their own roughness. Multiplied afflictions are a sign God hath a care of you ; he will not suffer you to run wild. And therefore, in defiance of the cross, learn to call God Father ; look through the cloud of the present dispensation to the love of God towards you.

'Father, forgive them.' Christ speaks as foreseeing the danger and punishment which they would bring on themselves as the fruit of their madness and folly, and therefore he prays, 'Father, forgive them.' This act was provocation enough to move God to dissolve the bonds of nature, to cleave the earth, that it might swallow them up quick, or to rain hell out of heaven upon them. Lesser offences have been thus punished, and one word from Christ's mouth had been enough. But, 'Father, forgive them.' We hear nothing but words of mild pity. When he says, 'Forgive,' he means also convert them ; for where there is no conversion there can be no remission.

I shall look upon this prayer under a twofold consideration—

1. As an high moral act of an holy man.
2. As a taste of his mediation and intercession, where we shall consider the public relation he sustained upon the cross.

First, Let us look upon it as a moral action. He doth not threaten fearful judgments, but prayed for his enemies ; there was no stain of passion and revenge upon his sufferings : 1 Peter ii. 21, ' Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' And wherein? ver. 23, ' Who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' One great use of Christ's death was to give us lessons of meekness and patience and humble suffering. In this act there is an excellent lesson. Let us look upon the necessary circumstances that serve to set it off—(1.) For whom he prays ; (2.) When he prays ; (3.) Why he prays ; (4.) In what manner.

1. For whom he prayeth ; for his persecutors, men that had done him the greatest contempt and villany which their spite and malice could invent. They had mocked and buffeted him, mangled his flesh with scourges, led him like a public spectacle of shame through the streets of the city, and by importunate clamours had gotten him to the cross, and there placed him in the midst of thieves. They had cursed themselves, and yet Christ prayed for them. In their rage they had even appealed to and dared divine justice : ' His blood be upon us and on our children ;' but Christ saith, ' Father, forgive them.' Yea, and which is more, they did all this to him when he came to serve the world in a design of the greatest love. Of all things, men cannot endure to have their love slighted. Holy David, when Nabal slighted his kindness, vowed the destruction of him and all his house ; but when Christ cometh with higher acts of kindness, he is despised and rejected of men : ' He came unto his own, and his own received him not,' John i. 11. Nay, his own persecuted him, and despitefully used him, and yet he prayeth for them. They omitted no kind of cruelty. The law saith, ' Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,' Lev. xxiv. 20 ; but when they cry, ' Crucify him,' he cries, ' Forgive them.' Oh, how may we wonder at this, who are so vindictive as we are !

2. When he prayeth ; in the very extremity and height of his sufferings. Then, when we are apt to forget our friends, Christ remembereth his enemies ; in the very height of his sorrows he mediates for a pardon for them. A man would have thought that the sharp sense of the afflictions wherewith he was exercised should have embittered his spirit ; if he would make intercession for sinners in heaven, a man would have thought that he should not have interceded upon the cross. We pardon when the misery is over, and, by the course of affairs, that which was intended for a mischief proveth an advantage ; as Joseph did his brethren : Gen. l. 20, ' As for you, ye thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.' But Christ in the very act of his sufferings seeketh mercy for the instruments of his passion. *Pendebat, et tamen petebat*, saith Austin ; their rage had brought him to the cross, and there Christ mediateth to bring them to heaven.

3. Who prayeth ; Jesus Christ. With honour enough to himself he might have done otherwise ; he could have destroyed them with the breath of his mouth or with a beam of his glory. We forgive when we cannot harm. Power efferateth the mind, and makes men fierce and cruel. Many would be cruel enough, but they are restrained



either by want of power or opportunity. But here neither was wanting: Mat. xxvi. 53, 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray unto my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' In man's eye that would have seemed a rare vindication of the glory and dignity of his person; but Christ doth not pray, Father, send twelve legions of angels, but, 'Father, forgive them.' One angel had been enough: 2 Kings xix. 35, 'The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand.' It would have been more easy for Christ to come down from the cross than to go up thither, that was the greater miracle. Four nails could not have held the Lord of glory, if he had not been nailed and fastened through by his own love and voluntary condescension. But Christ would not be glorious now in acts of power, but of mildness and charity, and therefore it is not, Father, destroy, but, Father, forgive them.

4. How he prayeth for them. He pleadeth their case, and putteth the fairest construction that can be made of an action so foul and enormous; they are poor ignorant people, led with a blind zeal. Christ pitcheth upon the only circumstance that serveth to lessen the offence; of all excuses this is the most plausible: 1 Tim. i. 13, 'I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief;' Acts iii. 17, 'And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.' We are wont to strain and force actions to the most rigorous interpretation they are capable of. *Iracundia solers est fingendi causas sui furoris*—Seneca. Anger is witty to find out causes to justify itself; and if there be aught to justify censure, we omit those alleviating circumstances and necessary mitigations, whereby our asperity may be taken off, and actions be more mildly considered. But Christ saith, Poor creatures! they act out of a blind zeal, they know not what they do; Father, forgive them.

*Use 1. Information.*

1. It informeth us that the love of Christ is greater than we can think or understand, much less express. If we be afflicted with any pain in the teeth, head, or eyes, we are so overcome with the sense of it, that we can think of nothing else; we neither admit the visit of friends, nor will we trouble ourselves with any business, our pain wholly engrosseth and taketh up our minds and thoughts. But Jesus Christ, in the midst of his agonies and painful sufferings, remembereth not only friends, but enemies, and is solicitous about their salvation. Now if he be thus affected towards persecutors, how is he to the persecuted? They cry, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' but he saith, 'Father, forgive them.' He might justly have called for vengeance, but he prayeth for mercy; nothing was so cruel but they were ready to think, and speak, and do against him in this blind and inconsiderate fury; but he doth not consider their injuries against himself, but their sin against God, and would have that pardoned; and this at the time when they sought not pardon for themselves, but were venting their malice against him. Which surely is an encouragement to the penitent that he will not be hard to be entreated by them that confess and forsake their sins, and fly unto him for mercy. He seeks for pardon for them that sought it not, and considereth not so much what they deserved, as what became himself,

and the riches of his grace. They curse, and he blesseth ; they vomit out scorns and slanders, but he poureth out prayers to God for them.

2. That all sins, even the greatest, except that against the Holy Ghost, are pardonable. What greater sin could there be than crucifying the Lord of glory ? yet upon repentance it is forgiven. That it was capable of pardon appeareth by this prayer of our Saviour, and that it was actually pardoned appeareth by Acts ii. When they were touched to the quick with the sense of this crime, and asked what they should do, Peter adviseth them to this remedy, Acts ii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins ;' and they found it effectual upon the use of it : ver. 41, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' And that it is so in the general case, our Lord assureth us, Mat. xii. 31, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' There is no exception of any sin, though it go so high as blasphemy, but the malicious blaspheming the operations of the Holy Ghost, those by which he testified, manifestly and sufficiently, that he was the true Messiah, and their imputing these operations to the devil. But of other sins there is no exception ; speaking against the Son of man was not believing him to be the Messiah ; that may be forgiven ; but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is resisting his manifestations, affirming them to be done by the devil rather than God, and this shall never be forgiven. Well, then, let us conceive of God's mercy according to the infiniteness of his nature, and of Christ's merits according to the dignity of his person ; an ocean of water will wash one sink or filthy hole clean.

3. That remission of sins is the free gift of God, and the fruit of his pity and grace. Christ asketh it of his Father, 'Father, forgive them : ' he must be sought to ; we cannot merit it of ourselves. David addresseth himself to God, and useth no other plea but grace and mercy : Ps. li. 1, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.' Our work lieth with the Father of mercies and the God of all compassions, that he may be reconciled to us, and seal up his perfect pardon to our souls.

4. That pardon of sins is a special benefit. Christ asked no more than, Father, forgive them. It is a special benefit, because it freeth us from the greatest evil, wrath to come : 1 Thes. i. 10, 'And it maketh us capable of the greatest blessing, eternal life : Titus iii. 7, 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. It is purchased at the dearest rate, even the blood of Christ : Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' It is brought about by the highest power, the finger of God, or his all-conquering Spirit, who by converting us, or giving us repentance, maketh us capable of pardon : Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins ;'



Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' It openeth the door to the choicest privileges, the favour of God and communion with him in the Spirit; therefore David pronounceth the pardoned blessed: Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity.'

5. That love of enemies, and those that have wronged us, is an high grace, and recommended to us by Christ's own example. Sure it is needful that we should learn this lesson, to be like God: Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful;' that we may obey God, who hath required this at our hands. Therefore we must consider not what others have been to us, but what God will have us to be to them, meek, patient, and merciful. Again, we hereby show the purity and sincerity of our love; nature will teach us to love those that love us, but grace only teacheth us to love enemies. This is love with self-denial. They who love us endear themselves to us, the other alienate themselves from us; yet for God's sake we can love them, and seek to draw them out of the snares of the devil, that we may restore them to God.

*Use 2.* Reproof of those that are cruel and revengeful. How different are they from Christ who are all for unkindness and revenge, and solicit vengeance against God's suffering servants with eager aggravations! Oh, how can these men look upon Christ's practice without shame! How can they look upon these prodigies of love and grace, and not blush! Can there be a greater crime and wrong done to any than was done to Christ? And yet when he was whipped, crowned with thorns, pierced with nails, lifted up upon the cross, he doth not pray for revenge, but pardon; he doth not cry, Justice! justice! but Mercy! mercy! 'Father, forgive them;' he doth not by captious queries and expostulations aggravate the offence, but he alleviates it by a sweet interpretation, 'They know not what they do.' It is strange to think what bloody principles many christians have espoused of late; that we rage against our brethren upon every offence, especially in matters of doubtful apprehension, where men are more liable to mistakes. Oh! it is sad, when God is but a little displeased, to help onward the affliction. I wonder where men learn that cruel and fell spirit into which we are commenced of late; it was wont to be good doctrine, 'Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' What is become of all those good lectures of charity, and meekness, and gentleness, which are commended to us in the rule of the gospel and the example of Christ? Certainly when the spirit is exulcerated it argues some loss of peace with God. David was never more cruel than when he had violated the peace of his own conscience: 2 Sam. xii. 31, 'And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them to pass through the brickkiln.' Certainly matters are not right between us and God when men's principles and practices grow bloody and cruel.

*Use 3.* To exhort us to imitate Christ in being meek, patient, merciful, void of malice, doing good for evil, bearing the worst usage without studying revenge. Surely the same mind should be in us that

was in Christ Jesus. Head and members are acted by the same soul ; so in the mystical body, Christ and we should be acted with the same spirit ; the same spirit of holy love, sweetness, and forgiveness that breathed in Christ should breathe forth in our lives and conversations : Eph. iv. 32, 'And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' All his ordinances imply this. In the word we hear of Christ's meekness ; his pattern is set forth that we might be like-minded ; in prayer we are taught to say, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' We break our sponson and promise solemnly given in this petition if we do not pardon others. In baptism, 'we put on Christ,' Rom. xiii. 14 ; we put on his nature and qualities, that is, planting us into his likeness. In the Lord's supper we come to renew our union and communion with him, and to liken ourselves to Christ yet more and more. Christ changeth the temper of those that spiritually feed upon him, as natural meats communicate their qualities to us. The Israelites were more generous because they were so long fed with manna ; Nero was more bloody because he sucked the milk of a cruel nurse, who was wont to besmear her dugs with blood ; Achilles was more valiant because he was nourished with the marrow of lions. Men's dispositions are much according to their food ; certainly those that eat the Lamb should not be wolves, but meek as Christ was, and ready to forgive, and every way transcribe their master's pattern. See how Stephen imitates his master when he comes to die. First he prayeth for himself : Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ;' as Christ did, Luke xxiii. 46, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ;' and then he intercedeth for his enemies : Acts vii. 60, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Here is not only an example of faith ; he committed his soul to Christ, but of charity, he deprecateth revenge from his enemies. Moses and other holy ones of God have done so. Moses : Num. xii. 13, 'Heal her now, O Lord, I beseech thee ;' when his sister Miriam was smitten with a leprosy for doing him wrong. Aaron, when he was despitely used, and his calling maligned : Num. xvi. 47, 48, 'He ran into the midst of the people, and behold the plague was begun among the people ; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people ; and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.' David fasted for his enemies when they were sick : Ps. xxxv. 13, 'But as for me, when they were sick my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting.' We fast against them often, but seldom fast for them. So Paul : 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13, 'Being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed, we entreat.' When we are looked upon and treated as evil-doers, we should bear it patiently, not rage against instruments, but pray the Lord to open their eyes, that they may see the greatness of their sin, in hating and opposing the godly. You should not think the example of Christ an act beyond imitation. You see the holy men of God have attained a great measure of self-denial ; do you go and do likewise.

1. In private cases. A man shall meet with offences in the world. All men have not faith ; some are absurd and injurious. What a comfort would a man have in his spirit when he can pity their blindness and pardon their malice. They took away the life of Christ, and



yet he saith, 'Father, forgive them;' he was slain by them, and yet he prayeth for them. Certainly it is not comely for us to retaliate, to hate, curse, revile, and pursue injury with injury. They that revenge take an example from their enemies, and do them this honour to make them their own pattern; and what comfort can any have to make a wicked man his precedent! Besides, to revenge is to rush into God's tribunal, and to take his work out of his hands: Prov. xxiv. 29, 'Say not, I will do to him as he hath to me; I will render to the man according to his work.' Solomon putteth it into such words as are proper to God, that we may be sensible of the pride and usurpation that is in revenge: and, Rom. xii. 19, 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' We take upon us to be rewarders when at least we should leave the case to God. You may put it into the hands of the righteous judge: 1 Peter ii. 23, 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Besides, it will much interrupt your prayers. Our revengeful dispositions must needs weaken our confidence, for we muse of others as we use ourselves. How can you say, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' when we are like vessels broken as soon as touched, and are furious and raging upon every wrong, and the least offence done to us? Alas! their offences to us are nothing like ours to God, either for number or weight. Not for number; no man can wrong us so much as we daily trespass against God. How many neglects and affronts doth mercy put up at our hands every day! Luke xvii. 4, 'If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.' Seventy times seven is a number too little for the transgressions and offences of one day, and yet we grow peevish and passionate upon every slight fault or wrong done to us. So for the weight; the naughty servant would not forgive a hundred pence when his master forgave him ten thousand talents, Mat. xviii. 24, compared with the 28th verse. There is a great difference between pence and talents; the Roman penny was sevenpence halfpenny, and their talent was one hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings. Their offences cannot be so heinous as ours, because of our great obligations to God, and the dignity of his essence; theirs are against dust and ashes, their guilty fellow-creatures; ours are against the great God. It is proper to christians, that know such an infinite pardoning mercy, to do something above heathens and publicans: Mat. v. 46, 'If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so?' Christianity should raise the affections to a greater self-denial, so that we are to love our very enemies. Besides all this, consider the benefit of a meek patience. Revenge is sweet, but you will find more pleasure in meekness. All vexations disturb the peace and quiet of the soul, and I cannot do my enemy a greater pleasure than to let him take away my contentment, and, when I am wronged by others, to wrong myself. Will you hurt yourself by passion and sin because others hurt you by slanders and persecutions? He that will not forgive hurts himself more than he that doeth the wrong; for the injury offered reacheth but to the name,

body, or goods, but the desire of revenge wounds the conscience, and provokes God to wrath, and shuts the gate of his mercy against us. The great motive that excites the devil to molest and disturb us by his instruments is not to hurt your bodies, but to tempt your souls to impatience and revenge, and to draw you to other sins; and therefore you do not conquer it as a temptation till you avoid the sin. Job was robbed and plundered, but in all this Job sinned not; to come off with a wounded conscience, this is to be foiled indeed. Besides, conscience will take hold of all revengeful acts. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment. Besides, consider the gain of others. Saul wept when he saw David's tenderness: 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 'And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice and wept.' Tenderness is expressed by heaping up coals upon your enemy's head: Prov. xxv. 21, 22, 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.' You may make him pliable to your purpose, as lead or wax melted by fire. Such charity doth often procure servants to God and friends to ourselves. It is indeed said there, 'and the Lord shall reward thee.' There are indeed some sour and crabbed pieces that will never be smoother, but if distorted and depraved natures are not won, God will reward thee. Endeavours of reconciliation are not lost with God; though you get nothing but scorn and contempt, you may comfort yourselves with your sincerity, and God will not be wanting. Besides all this, consider the honour of being above an injury: Prov. xix. 11, 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.' As it is the glory of God to pardon sin; we think it a disgrace; but the Holy Ghost tells us it is the glory of a man. It is the devil's design to suffer the world to miscall grace; meekness is sheepishness, and patience is a kind of weakness and servility; an argument *ignavi ingenii*, of a slow dull temper, that hath no sense of things; as astronomers call glorious stars dogs and bears and dragons' tails. Oh, consider this is an height proper to christianity! nature could not reach it; there is no greater servility than to be a slave to one's passions: Ezek. xvi. 30, 'How weak is thy heart, saith the Lord, since thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman?' There are no spirits so feeble as those that are swayed by the ruffle of their own passions.

2. In public cases. In these times of mutual provocation we are apt to return evil for evil and word for word, and to curse and pray against one another; but we should labour to return good for evil, for injury doth not justify revenge. Religious quarrels are usually carried on with great hatred and animosity, for then religion feedeth the excess of passion, and instead of being a judge, becometh a party, and that which should be a restraint proveth fuel. The quarrel between Christ and his persecutors was a quarrel of religion, and yet he prays, 'Father, forgive them;' and if Christ did thus, why should not christians? Oh! consider it—(1.) As to open enemies; (2.) As to the undue carriage of brethren.

[1.] As to open enemies. Christ saith, Mat. v. 44, 'Love your



enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' Lest we should excuse ourselves by a colour and show of religion, and so give indulgence to the exorbitancy of our passions, Christ names 'persecutors,' that are not only our enemies, but God's enemies; you are to pray for them, and wish them conviction of sin and reformation. And you see how Christ practiseth his own doctrine, and so taught us not only living, but dying. These were carried on by a blind zeal; alas! that they have no more light nor better principles. I doubt in all our divisions we have not plied this way of love; if we did, they would be soon cured and healed. We pray one against another, and seek each other's ruin and destruction, but when have we commended our enemies to God's grace and pity? And after all, we are apt to baptize our sufferings, which have been the effects of our pride and passion, with the glorious name of persecution, and that exasperateth our spirits, and we think it is but a duty to call for fire from heaven. We know not what manner of spirits we are of. An angry zeal hath the less of God in it, because it is so hastily kindled and so hardly suppressed.

[2.] As to undue carriage of brethren: James v. 10, 'Grudge not one against another, brethren;' *μὴ στενάζετε*, groan not. When they should commend each other to the grace of God, they groan one against another. We should willingly bury the remembrance of their injuries. There cannot be unity, sympathy, brotherly love amongst the Lord's people, unless there be a heart to pity the infirmities of one another, and a proneness of spirit to do good contrary to what they deserve at our hands.

*Quest.* But is it not lawful to pray for revenge? Zechariah, when he was stoned between the temple and the altar, said, 'The Lord look upon it and require it,' 2 Chron. xxiv. 22; and David in the psalms prays that God would not pardon his enemies.

*Ans.* We cannot always imitate what the prophet did, who could know by special revelation who had sinned unto death, and therefore cannot use these imprecations unless conditionally. Their curses were predictions, and uttered by the spirit of prophecy, not by any private spirit. Meek and humble addresses to God, and wrestling for their good, suit better with us and the example of Jesus Christ: 1 Peter iii. 9, 'Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.' It is more suitable to christianity to wish good to them that curse and injure you. If you will not imitate Christ, you are none of his disciples, nor will he be your Saviour, nor must you think to live and reign with him in heaven. You must overcome yourself, and corrupt nature, that thirsteth after revenge: Prov. xvi. 32, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Overcome and shame the party that doeth the wrong: 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' Look upon them as objects of pity and compassion rather than of passion and anger: Eph. i. 32, 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Consider what God hath done to you that you may do the same to them.

Secondly, The next consideration of this prayer of Christ is as a taste and pledge of his mediation and intercession. So it is prophesied, Isa. liii. 12, 'He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' Christ was placed in the midst of thieves, as the first clause is explained, Mark xv. 28 ; and he made intercession, that is, prayed for his persecutors. The whole chapter is a prophetic narrative of the acts and sorrows of Christ upon the cross. In this public sense and consideration, let us see what may be gathered out of the clause, 'Father, forgive them.'

1. It is an instance of Christ's love and bowels to sinners ; he loved mankind so well that he prayed for them that crucified him. Look on the Lord Jesus as praying and dying for enemies, and improve it as a ground of confidence. Upon the cross he would give us an instance of his efficacy in converting the thief, and of his affection in praying for his persecutors. We were as great enemies to Christ, and as deep in the guilt of his passion, as they : Rom. v. 10, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' The enemies of his kingdom are every way as bad as the enemies of his person. If Christ did not say, 'Father, forgive,' what would become of us ? You will say, We are christians ; but scandalous sinners renew his sufferings, and 'put him to an open shame,' Heb. vi. 6. Oh, let us adore God for these experiences ! It is a mighty ground of hope that Christ hath put in for a pardon ; he would not die till he had expressed his reconciliation with his enemies.

2. See what is the voice and merit of his sufferings, 'Father, forgive them.' This is the speech that Christ uttered when he was laid on the cross. The apostle compareth Christ's blood and the blood of Abel : Heb. xii. 24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' Abel's blood was clamorous in the ears of God : Gen. iv. 10, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground ;' and so in the conscience of Cain it crieth, Avenge ! avenge me ! Christ's blood hath another voice, it speaketh to God to pacify his wrath, and to pardon us, if penitent and believing sinners ; it speaketh to conscience to be quiet, God hath found out a ransom. The blood of Christ may speak against us as well as against the Jews, for by our sins we made Christ to die. Oh, be not quiet till it speak peace in your consciences. Christ's blood was spilt in malice, as Abel's was, and might have cried for vengeance on the actors, who were not only the Jews, but we, and it yet speaketh as Abel's did : Heb. xi. 4, 'By it he, being dead, yet speaketh.' It is a speaking blood, and is yet speaking. The speaking of the blood is interpreted according to the words in their mouth wherewith they died : Mat. xxiii. 35, 'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zecharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the porch and the altar.' Our Lord gathers it from Zecharias' saying, 'The Lord look upon it and require it,' 2 Chron. xxiv. 22. So the words of Christ interpret his death.

3. In the mediatory consideration it hinteth the coupling of his intercession with his satisfaction. On the cross, there he dieth and there he prayeth ; he was both priest and sacrifice. The high priest under the law was not only to slay the sacrifice, but to intercede for the



people ; first the beast was slain without the camp, and then the blood was carried into the holy of holies, and there prayer was made with incense ; but before that, Aaron, when he was going into the holy place before the Lord, was to cause the sound of his golden bells to be heard under pain of death, Exod. xxviii. 35. To this I parallel this action of Christ upon the cross. This prayer was as the sound of the golden bells ; he would make his voice to be heard by prayer, and then he goes into the holy of holies ; the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shed his blood before the tribunal of God, he sendeth forth a prayer. God would have our salvation carried on in a way of mercy and justice, and Christ was to mingle entreaty with satisfaction ; as, Lev. xvi. 14, the high priest was to bring the blood within the veil, and to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat. He must satisfy justice and make an address to mercy, that we that have sinned with both hands may take hold of God with both hands : Rom. iii. 24, ' Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; ' it is ' freely,' and yet ' through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; ' these two sweetly accord.

4. This is a pledge of his constant intercession in heaven. The ceremonies of the old law were not only types of Christ, but his visible actions were a kind of types and pledges of his spiritual actions, 1 John ii. 1, ' If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' He that could pray for enemies will pray for friends, and he that got our pardon by his intercession will promote our salvation. Certainly Christ's glorified soul loseth no affection ; he is as earnest with the Father for his friends as ever he was upon the cross for his persecutors : Heb. ix. 24, ' For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' Christ doth appear as our advocate in court, not only in our name, but in our stead.

5. It shows the nature of his intercession. It not only implies the everlastingness of his merit, that his blood doth continue to deserve such things at the hands of God as we stand in need of, but it is a continual representation of his merit ; it is not a metaphor, but a solemn act of his priesthood. Again, it is not by verbal expressions, such as he used hereupon earth, ' Father, forgive them ; ' his became the state of his humiliation ; but now he intercedes *non voce, sed miseratione*, not by voice, but by pity. What is it then ? Partly his appearing in heaven as God in our nature : Heb. ix. 24, ' Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,' &c., ' but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' He is said to appear before God for us, as the high priest came and presented himself before God with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on his breastplate. Partly in his expressing an actual willingness, or the desires of his holy soul concerning our salvation : John xvii. 24, ' Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am ; ' and so he appears in our names, as well as in our nature. Partly by some acts of adoration of the sovereign majesty of God ; some address to God there is : John xiv. 16, ' I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' He doth not only ask the enlargement of his own kingdom : Ps. ii. 8,

'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' but the pardon, comfort, peace, and supply of particular persons: 1 John ii. 1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Partly in his presenting our prayers and supplications: Rev. viii. 3, 'And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne;' and therefore he is called 'a minister of the sanctuary,' Heb. viii. 2. This is the nature of Christ's intercession.

6. The success of Christ's intercession, 'Father, forgive them.' Was he heard in this? Yes; this prayer converts the centurion, and those, Acts ii. 41, above 'three thousand,' and presently after five thousand more, Acts iv. 4. In the compass of a few days above eight thousand of his enemies were converted. Christ is good at interceding; his prayers are always heard: John xi. 42, 'I knew that thou hearest me always.' And therefore let us seek no other mediator; God cannot deny his own Son. Jesus Christ the righteous intercedes for us; let us put all our requests into his hands.

II. I come now to the argument used, 'They know not what they do.' But you will say, Christ elsewhere complaineth of his enemies, that they know him, and refused him out of malice: John xv. 24, 'Now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father;' and therefore he saith, they had no cloak for their sin, but were utterly without excuse, for they could not plead ignorance.

*Ans.* 1. This is not spoken of all, but of some only. The greatest part were moved with the command, authority, and persuasion of the priests, or blinded with a false zeal to preserve their old religion, and so thought they did God service in crucifying Christ. Those that sinned out of malice, Christ had told them their doom before: Mat. xii. 32, 'Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.'

2. They knew him to be a just man, though they knew him not to be the Lord of glory, and that he did many signs which the prophets foretold should be done by the Messiah; and therefore at least that he was a great prophet, and as such they should have revered and received him, so that they had the less cloak for their sin.

3. Christ excused not *a toto*, but *a tanto*, not altogether, but only sheweth that they were capable of pardon because of their ignorance. Christ excuseth the sin of his enemies in that manner that he could excuse them; he could not altogether excuse the injustice of Pilate, nor the cruelty of the soldiers, nor the envy of the chief priests, nor the folly and unthankfulness of the people, nor the perjury of the false witnesses; all that he could plead was some ignorance of the dignity of his person: 1 Cor. ii. 8, 'Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' The chief men of the Jews did not understand the mystery of redemption, and many were ignorant, not only of the divinity of Christ, but his innocency also: 'They know not what they do.'

*Doct.* There is a difference between sinners, and it is a more dangerous thing to sin against knowledge than out of ignorance.



1. Some sin wittingly and wilfully, as Cain, Saul, Judas, &c., who against the apparent light of their consciences venture upon the foulest actions.

2. Others sin out of ignorance; either they do not certainly know what they do to be sin, or do not expressly consider it. So Paul in persecuting the church of God: 1 Tim. i. 13, 'Who was before a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.'

3. Some sin knowingly indeed, but out of infirmity, either arising from some great fear of danger and present death, as Peter denied his master; it is done with a troubled mind: these may be recovered to God, but with difficulty. Or else they are hurried to evil by the baits of the flesh, and pleasing temptations: James i. 12, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' Now their case cannot easily be spoken to, for it needs much discussion. It may be by surprisal, and that for one act, and none of the grossest: Gal. vi. 1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' The devil many times leaveth no time for deliberation, and bringeth his tempting baits not to the fore-door of reason, but to the back-door of sensual appetite, which being in a rage, blindeth the mind. But if they sin with a strong will, their case is more dangerous; especially if they live and lie in sin after many experiences of the evil of it, their condition is deplorable.

This foundation being laid, let us see how far ignorance excuseth from sin.

[1.] Whatever sin we commit, it is sin, and of itself deserveth damnation. Sin is not determined to be sin by its being voluntary or involuntary, but by its contrariety to the law of God: 1 John iii. 4, 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' Therefore the causal particle *for* in the text doth not show the reason of pardon, but the capableness of pardon. So Paul's ignorance was not the cause of God's mercy, for sin cannot be the cause of mercy, but only the occasion of it. The nature of sin is not determined by the voluntariness of it, but only the degree of it.

[2.] Ignorance is either antecedent, concomitant, or consequent.

(1.) Antecedent, going before the act, as in the generality of the Jews: Acts iii. 17, 'And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.' Out of ignorance and blind zeal they crucified him whom God did make both Lord and Christ.

(2.) Concomitant. A man hath knowledge, but useth it not for the present. It is one thing to sin with knowledge, and another thing to sin against knowledge; he that hath knowledge, but for the present may be blinded by his lusts and carnal affections, sinneth not against knowledge directly, but collaterally only, as he that stealeth or committeth adultery doth not this for sin's sake (for none can will evil as evil), but he only attendeth to the profit and pleasure that is in adultery and theft, but shutteth the eyes of his mind against the filthiness or injustice that is in it; and therefore he is like a man that leapeth from an high place into the water, who first shutteth his eyes, and then casts himself into the flood or stream.

(3.) Consequent ignorance is after the sin or act of the will, either

from the depraved disposition of the will: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd;' or from the just judgment of God: John ix. 39, 'For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.' God inflicts a judicial blindness on men that will not obey the truth.

[3.] Ignorance is either invincible or vincible.

(1.) Invincible ignorance is when there is not sufficient revelation, when it is a thing we should know, but God hath not brought light among us. Thus the heathens are punished for not glorifying God, whom they knew by the light of nature: Rom. i. 21, 'When they knew God, they glorified him not as God;' not because they believed not in Christ, for he was not revealed unto them; but christians shall be punished for not obeying the gospel: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

(2.) Vincible ignorance is when there are plentiful means and great helps to overcome it; then is our ignorance more culpable. This is seen when either ignorance is voluntary and pertinacious, or when there is gross negligence. When it is voluntary: 2 Peter iii. 5, 'For this they are willingly ignorant of.' That they may sin more freely and securely, they will not know what may disturb or trouble their sleep in sin: Job xxi. 14, 'Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' The psalmist says of them, Ps. xciv. 10, 'It is a people that do err in their hearts; they have not known my ways.' They err in their hearts as well as in their minds; when they do not desire to know what they should know, this ignorance is voluntary. Or else it is bewrayed by gross negligence, when a man doeth a thing that, if he were not grossly negligent, he might know to be sin: Eph. iii. 15-17, 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' A christian is bound to use all holy means to know all things that belong to his duty, and must bestow much time and diligence upon it. If he is grossly ignorant, it is a sign he hath a mind to put a cheat upon his soul.

*Use.* Let us beware of sin against knowledge; these sins, of all others, are the most dangerous, whether they be sins of omission; to omit duties that we know to be duties, this is very dangerous: James iv. 17, 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;' or sins of commission, to commit sins that we know to be sins: Rom. ii. 21, 22, 'Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' To commit sins that we know to be sins is to involve ourselves in wrath and vengeance. Have a care then of these sins; if you are guilty of them, it cannot be pleaded for you, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.'



## SERMON UPON JOHN XIX. 30.

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*He said, It is finished ; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.—JOHN XIX. 30.*

THIS is one of the seven words which Christ uttered upon the cross, the last save one ; for before his bowing of the head, and giving up the ghost, those words must come in which are mentioned Luke xxiii. 46, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.'

To make way for these words, we need go no further back than the 28th verse. It is said there, 'After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst ;' where we may observe—

1. The exact knowledge which Christ had of all his sufferings : 'He knew that all things were accomplished ;' namely, all the preparative sufferings which were to usher in his death. All these bitter sorrows were numbered out to him by the divine decrees, and pre-signified in the prophecies ; Jesus knew all the exact tale and account of them ; a circumstance that doth much commend his love to us. Christ knew how dear the bargain of souls would be to him, and yet he would show his obedience to the Father and his love to mankind. He long since sat down and counted the charges, and yet he came to do his Father's will. When a business proveth hazardous and inconvenient, we are apt to say, If I had known it would have cost me so much, I should never have undertaken it. Christ went not to the cross blindfold ; he knew the work of our redemption would be troublesome and painful ; that he was to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers ; that he was to be hurried from the garden to the courts of men, from the courts of men to the cross, and there to endure acute pains and torments : Jesus knew that all these things were to be fulfilled.

2. Observe, it is said he knew 'they were accomplished.' Christ had a lively feeling of every part of his sorrows, and his senses remained in full vigour to the last, and without any stupefaction. He knew what hour the clock of the divine decree would next strike, or what was the next circumstance whereby he was to discover himself to be the true Messiah. David saith, 'Died Abner as a fool dieth ?' 2 Sam. iii. 32. We may say so, Died the Lord Jesus as a fool dieth, in a stupid senseless way, or as one merely passive ? Extremity of pain had now surprised the thieves which were crucified with him ; we

hear no more of them ; but Christ's reason and senses are still exercised, and his sorrows made more active by his own apprehension.

3. Observe, 'That the scriptures might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst.' By fulfilling another prophecy God discovereth another note whereby the Messiah might be known. All the passages of Christ's death were appointed with infinite wisdom and love ; either they were such as were necessary parts of redemption, or some indications whereby the Messiah fore-prophesied of might be discovered. Here is another prophecy fulfilled in Christ's thirst. The prophecies alluded to are two : one is Ps. xxii. 15, 'My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ; thou hast brought me to the dust of death.' The other prophecy hinteth the act of the Jewish malice : Ps. lxix. 21, 'They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' Here was light enough, or conviction sufficient for any but those who resolved to shut their eyes.

4. He said, 'I thirst.' He had spent much time in watching, lost much blood, his body was tortured with extreme pain, and his soul scorched with a sense of God's wrath ; and therefore well might he cry out, 'I thirst.' It is notable that Christ would not declare his thirst till he knew that all things were accomplished ; that is, every sad accident except his death. Certainly if we consider the agonies of the garden, where he excerned blood instead of sweat, his scourging, his being buffeted with the soldiers, his bearing the cross, all this might make him thirst before ; but when wine mingled with myrrh, a stupefying potion, was tendered to him before, he refused it : Mark xv. 23, 'And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he received it not.' But now, when all was accomplished, he saith, 'I thirst.' He would take no natural refreshment till he had borne all our griefs and sorrows, and every sad passage by which he might promote our comfort was accomplished. He was so mindful of us that he forgot himself. He saith that it was meat to him to do his Father's will : John iv. 34, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' Though the cross-work was sad work, yet that was as drink to Christ. After he had sweltered under the torment of so many hours' drouth, he crieth out, 'I thirst.' Christ would make his sufferings as full of merit as possibly he could, and therefore would not receive the least draught of comfort till he had paid our whole debt. We 'do evil with both hands earnestly,' Micah vii. 3, and fill our actions with as much disobedience and rebellion as we can possibly put into them : 'Behold thou hast spoken, and done evil things as thou couldst,' Jer. iii. 5. Sin hath not been cheap to us ; we have bought the pleasure of it at a dear rate, with much loss and self-denial ; and therefore Christ's sufferings were made as high and extreme as possibly they could be.

Let us now see what they did to Christ when he had declared the extremity of his thirst : 'Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth,' ver. 29. This fact of theirs is diversely construed ; some say, they did it out of kindness, and that it was usual to provide a vessel of vinegar, and to have it at hand under the cross of those that were executed ; this is probable : others think it an act of spite



and malice, partly because it is made an exaggeration of calamity : Ps. lxi. 21, 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink ;' and partly because their courtesy to the dying was to give wine and myrrh, and therefore it is said : Prov. xxxi. 6, 'It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink ;' and ver. 6, 'Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of an heavy heart ;' that is to say, it is not for the judge, but the condemned ; and they mingled it with myrrh and hot spices, partly to attenuate the blood, and so to despatch them the sooner, and partly to cause giddiness, that their senses might be the sooner gone. But now, instead of wine and myrrh they gave Christ vinegar and gall to increase his misery ; and they prepared it in readiness in case he called for the usual refreshment. And the conjecture of the Carthusian is not amiss, who imputeth it to the malice of the soldiers to change the wine prepared by the charitable women into vinegar, for the greater spite and mockage. And it is said, 'They filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop.' The other evangelists say, 'They put it upon a reed ;' and it is hard to conceive then how they could put it upon hyssop. It is probable that hyssop in these countries was tall, as mustard-seed is said to grow up into a tree ; and Pliny saith they made staves of mallows in Arabia, which with us is but a slender herb ; but hyssop is put for a shrub. Solomon wrote of all herbs, from the cedar to the hyssop, but that is wall-hyssop, which is dwarfish and tender, as ours is.

Observe, when Christ stood in our stead, no comfort was granted to him but what was devised to augment his grief. When his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws, 'They gave him vinegar to drink,' when he was providing for us a cup of blessings, a torrent and a river of pleasure, of which we might drink : ver. 30, 'When he had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished ; and he bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.' When he had received it, that is, tasted it, for they put it into his mouth with a sponge on the top of a reed, then he said, 'It is finished ;' that is, as much as was necessary for his humiliation, God's glory, and man's salvation ; as much as was decreed, as much as was foretold. And he saith, 'It is finished,' because he was now upon the last work, death, which was coming upon him ; and therefore foldeth it in the expression with what is past, 'It is finished,' because the last act was at hand : Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed ;' that is, which is about to be shed : John xvii. 4, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' All the sufferings were now completed at death, which he was to suffer for our sins.

*Doct.* Christ closed not his sufferings till all was finished which he had to do for us.

1. In what sense it is said, 'It is finished.'

2. The evidences and reasons thereof.

3. What comfort this is to the faithful.

I. In what sense it is said, 'It is finished.'

1. All the scripture prophecies which spake of Christ's death and sufferings were now fulfilled and accomplished ; as that he should make his entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass in all humility ; this

was prophesied of the Messiah : Zech. ix. 9, ' Behold thy king cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass ; ' and fulfilled by Christ, Mat. xxi. 4, 5, ' All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold the king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.' That he should be betrayed by one of his familiars, his own disciple : Ps. lv. 12, 13, ' It was not an enemy that reproached me ; then I could have borne it : neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me : but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance.' So Ps. xli. 9, ' Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his head against me ; ' which was fulfilled, Mat. xxvi. 23, ' He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me ; ' and accordingly Judas came to attack him, Mat. xxvi. 47. That he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver : Zech. xi. 12, ' So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.' Fulfilled, Mat. xxvi. 15. That with these thirty pieces of silver there should be bought afterwards a field of potsherds : Zech. xi. 13, ' And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter : and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.' Fulfilled, Mat. xxvii. 7, ' And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.' That being apprehended, he should be most barbarously entreated by the Jews, and be beaten and buffeted, and his face defiled with spitting, according to that of Isaiah the prophet : Isa. l. 6, ' I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Fulfilled, Mat. xxvi. 67, ' Then did they spit in his face, and buffet him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands.' That they would wound, rend, and tear his body with scourges before they put him to death : Isa. liii. 5, ' He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Fulfilled, Mat. xxvii. 26, ' When he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.' And they did at length put him to death according to the prophecy : ' The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for himself,' Dan. ix. 26. That the death that he should die was the death of the cross, unto which he was nailed hand and foot according to that of David : Ps. xxii. 16, ' They pierced my hands and my feet ; ' and that of Zech. xii. 10, ' They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' Fulfilled, Luke xxiii. 33, ' And when they were come to Mount Calvary, there they crucified him.' That he was crucified between two malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left, according to that of Isa. liii. 12, ' He was numbered with the transgressors ; ' Luke xxii. 37, ' For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in me ; And he was reckoned among transgressors, for the things concerning me have an end.' He was to pray for his enemies and persecutors, according to that of Isa. liii. 12, ' He made intercession for the transgressors ; ' and this was fulfilled in that prayer, Luke xxiii. 24, ' Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' So Ps. lxix. 21, ' In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' Fulfilled as before.



That they should divide his apparel, and cast lots for his upper garment: Ps. xxii. 18, 'They part my garment among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.' Fulfilled, Mat. xxvii. 35, 'And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots.' Well, then, all these particulars foretold of the Messiah were exactly fulfilled in our Saviour, and so conduce to settle our hearts in believing his person and office. Well, then, might he say now, 'It is finished.'

2. That the substance of the types were accomplished in him, as that of the brazen serpent, the paschal lamb, the daily and yearly sacrifices, the offering of Isaac; all which prefigured that Christ should die for the sins of the world. As Abraham offered his only son Isaac to God as a proof and demonstration of his faith and obedience: 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me,' Gen. xxii. 12; so God gave his Son as a proof and demonstration of his love: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' Isaac carried the wood to the sacrifice of himself, so did Christ his cross. The lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever looked upon it should be healed: Num. xxi. 9, 'And Moses made a serpent, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if any serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived;' this figured Christ lifted up upon the cross, that all those bitten by the old serpent might by looking be cured: John iii. 14, 15, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' The paschal lamb was slain just at the time when Christ died, and his flesh eaten, not a bone broken, John xix. 33; his blood sprinkled on the door-posts; all which were accomplished in Christ, who is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,' John i. 29. The daily sacrifice was offered morning and evening, to show our daily use of Christ, who was 'a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19. The anniversary sacrifice of the two goats on the day of expiation, Num. xvi., when there was a live goat to be sent into the wilderness, and the other was slain, and Aaron was to put both his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, confessing the sins of the people, and that scape-goat was to carry all their sins into the land of forgetfulness; all which signified the expiation of all our sins by Christ dying for our offences, and rising again for our justification. For the scape-goat was sent into the wilderness far from the sanctuary, to show that all our sins are put far away out of God's sight; the other goat is said to be kept for the Lord, that it might be slain, and be offered to him for sacrifice upon the altar. Well, now, these and all other types were finished, that is, obtained their end and accomplishment.

3. All was finished that was necessary to make him a fit pattern of patience to us; for he had borne the extremity of his enemies' malice, all that man or devils could by the permission of God execute upon him; for he saith, Luke xxii. 53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' Yea, he had drunk up the cup which the Father had put into his hands, to the very dregs. One end of Christ's death was to give us an example: 1 Peter ii. 21, 'Christ also suffered for us,

leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' Now here is a full copy and pattern of the right way of suffering for all his own to imitate.

[1.] From the matter. Are you tempted and opposed by Satan and his instruments? so was Christ. Have you discountenance from men? Christ had much more. Doth God seem to forsake you? so he did by Christ. Are you fain to lie on your knees crying for mercy? Christ 'in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared,' Heb. v. 7. Are you mocked, reviled, buffeted, contumeliously used? so was Christ. Are you scourged, put to death by violence? so was Christ.

[2.] From the manner; with meekness and constancy. With meekness, not as swine, but as sheep: Isa. liii. 7, 'As a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;' 1 Peter ii. 23, 'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Though he had not in the least kind offended either God or man, yet he was handled as a sinner; and when foul crimes were laid to his charge, he did not repay his slanderers in their own coin, but resigned himself to God to deal with him and his persecutors as he saw fitting; he vented no carnal passion. So for constancy; he continued till all was finished, and 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. When he was tempted to descend from the cross, he would not, but stayed there as long as it was necessary; to show us that we should not descend from our cross, and free ourselves from tribulation by sin till all be finished. If God keepeth us long in an oppressed state without relief or deliverance, do not make haste, but tarry his leisure. If by providence you are unequally yoked, bear your cross as long as God seeth fit to continue it to you. If it be a long imprisonment, a long tedious sickness, or any other affliction, do not descend from your cross till God take it off, and help not yourselves by sin out of affliction.

[3.] From the end; the bitterest trouble will at length have an end. Christ was a man of sorrows all his days, tempted, despised, persecuted, censured, scourged, crucified, but at length the *τετέλεσται*, 'It is finished,' cometh, and there is a kind of triumph over all his enemies and calamities; to teach us to finish our course with perseverance and patience, that at the last we may say we are come to the end of our sorrows. His laborious pilgrimage was now over, and there will a time come when ours shall be over also. Christ's life was a continual cross and constant affliction, but at length all was finished, and the sorrows of thirty-three years recompensed with glory and honour, and great fruit and success in the affairs of his kingdom. What is a little momentary suffering to the rest of eternity? For a little while he was the despising of men, and the leaving-off of the people; but afterwards God exalted him, and gave him a name above all names. The perfidious Jews rejoiced for a while, but a sad reckoning came afterwards. Judas had small time to enjoy his thirty pieces; Pilate within a while rued his facility and yielding to the importunity of the Jews. But as to afflictions holily suffered, stay a little, and all the bitter part will be over.



4. All was fulfilled which God determined to be done for the expiation of sin ; so that no more ransom is to be paid ; our debt is satisfied ; divine justice hath no more demand to us ; sin, Satan, and death are spoiled and disarmed, and way is made for our salvation to be owned, as coming from Christ alone, This is the main circumstance, and therefore I shall explain it a little—(1.) Negatively ; (2.) Positively.

[1.] Negatively ; and there—(1.) In regard of Christ himself ; and (2.) In respect of us.

(1.) In regard of Christ himself. Not as if all the necessary acts of his mediation were now past. Death was just at hand, and was comprised in the expression ; his lying in the grave was but the continuation of his abasement, till the time of his exaltation should come. But in the way of satisfying justice he had no more to do ; whatever was done afterwards was by way of reward, not to satisfy justice, but to satisfy the world of the dignity of his person. He was to rise from the dead, and ascend into glory ; that is, for our more abundant comfort. His resurrection was his solemn acquittance ; our surety was let out of prison : Rom. iv. 25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' His ascension was that we might have a friend at God's right hand to appear for us : Heb. viii. 1, 'We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens ;' Heb. ix. 24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ;' that being in a glorified and exalted condition, he might powerfully apply his purchase, and by his Spirit communicate the fruits thereof to believers. And he is to come to judgment, to bless and reward his people and to punish his enemies. But all the sufferings are now completed, or about to be completed, which he was to suffer for our sins.

(2.) In respect of us. It is not so finished but that something is to be done by the creature. Though the satisfaction be never so perfect, yet there is a necessity of application. The sacrifice and atonement is sufficient, but it must be applied in the way appointed by God. The means of applying are partly internal, which qualify the subject, and make us capable of the benefit of this atonement and satisfaction, which are faith and repentance, and also new obedience as the consequent of both ; for repentance is a returning to our duty to God, and faith a thankful owning of our Redeemer, by whom we return ; and if we are serious and real, all will end in new obedience and holiness, or else we are liable to wrath still. Faith is necessary : Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Repentance is necessary : Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' New obedience is necessary : Heb. v. 9, 'He is become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' And partly external, by the word and sacraments. The word : John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' The word calleth upon us to accept of Christ, and that life and mercy which is offered to us in him ; the sacraments, which are baptism and the Lord's supper : By baptism we profess and are obliged to put on Christ : Gal. iii. 27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on

Christ ;' or to apply him to ourselves as a garment to the body, that he may communicate to us his righteousness, life, and Spirit ; and by the Lord's supper we come more abundantly to take part in this consolation : 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?' that is, hereby we are solemnly made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, and the benefits purchased thereby.

[2.] Positively ; that the work of our redemption, so far as related to sufferings, was now about to be consummated. Christ's sacrifice, which he was about to offer for us, was no imperfect sacrifice. This appeareth by his message to Herod : Luke xiii. 32, 'I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected ;' that is, the work of his office was then fully to be accomplished : Heb. ii. 10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings.' Christ as mediator seemed to lack something till the full number of his sorrows was accomplished ; then he was perfectly fitted to do us good. So Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' As to an offering, there needeth no more. A patched salvation, of half of Christ and of half of the creature, will not do good ; as if Christ must do a part and we must merit the rest ; this is inconsistent with God's design. We must not part stakes with God ; this is neither for our comfort, God's glory, nor our Redeemer's welcome to heaven. No ; Christ is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ; he could avouch his work before the tribunal of God ; all is finished. Now he can plead his right at the bar of justice : Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'

## II. The evidences and reasons of this complete satisfaction.

1. From the dignity of the person satisfying. Two things are required in our mediator that he might be a sufficient undertaker for us. One is, that he should be perfectly holy and righteous ; for how could he redeem us from sin, who, being defiled with sin, had needed to be redeemed himself ? The second was, that he should be a divine and infinite person ; for sin being committed against an infinite majesty, therefore the suffering by which it must be expiated must be of an infinite value. Now both these do perfectly concur in Christ ; for as man, 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26 ; and died, 'The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18. He was perfectly holy, even holiness itself : Luke i. 35, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' As he was God over all, blessed for ever, he was capable to give a value to his sufferings ; to which purpose God is said to purchase the church with his own blood : Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' In short, God was resolved to lose no glory by the fall ; and therefore, whosoever was the redeemer, he was to restore what Adam took away by the fall. God's authority was violated by the creatures' transgression, whose command was just, and our obedience reasonable. Now it was meet that God should keep up the authority of his law. His majesty also was despised in slighting the threatening, and his holiness



wronged, as if he did not hate sin; and his justice and truth, as if he would not punish it; his power lessened, for sin is an act of presumption, and implieth a contest with God. Now in all these respects it was necessary that God should vindicate his glory, and be no loser; which was fully brought to pass by Christ, to whom there is in scripture a double fulness and sufficiency attributed. A fulness of grace or holiness: 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himself,' Col. i. 19, 20. And therefore he is said, 'To be full of grace and truth, that of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace,' John i. 14, 16. Besides this, there is a 'fulness of the godhead that dwelt in him bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not mystically and spiritually, as in believers; not symbolically, as in the sacraments; not typically, as in the law; but bodily, that is, really and personally, as body is opposed to shadow, or noteth a person. Well, then, the argument is strong. If the person satisfying were not only holy and undefiled, but also infinite, the satisfaction also must be infinite, and therefore most perfect and sufficient; for what can be greater and more perfect than what is infinite? And therefore all is finished; if such a person will take a body, and die for us, there needeth no other satisfaction.

2. I reason from the unity of the mediatory office, and that oblation or sacrifice which was made by Christ by virtue of that office: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'If one died for all, then were all dead;' 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' And as these places prove that there is but one mediator, so there is but one sacrifice: Heb. x. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;' and ver. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' Rom. v. 18, 'By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all to justification of life;' Heb. ix. 26, 'But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' ver. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' The scripture so emphatically insisting upon this term, 'once;' certainly all is finished; there needeth no more to be done by us to satisfy God's justice; that is sufficiently done already.

3. From the greatness of the punishment imposed upon Christ; for if he suffered all the punishments due to us, it cannot be that anything more should be done to pacify God; all is finished. Now Christ omitted none of those things which divine justice required: he 'fulfilled all righteousness,' Mat. iii. 15; 'Was obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. Yea, and suffered all those things which the law did put upon sinners, either as to loss or sense, as to desertion or as to the curse; and therefore he is said, 'To bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows, and to be wounded for our transgressions, and to be bruised for our iniquities,' Isa. liii. 4, 5; 'To be made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 15; 'To be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. God spared him not, but put him to grief, not out of hatred to his Son, but love to our salvation. Hence those agonies of Christ, and prayers, and tears, and strong cries.

4. From God's approbation of the person and sacrifice of Christ. If God did so far approve the sacrifice of Christ as willingly to accept it

for our redemption, that upon it he grounded a covenant, and made offers of terms of grace to us, and reconciliation with us, there is no question but that upon Christ's death all was finished. No more was necessary for paying the price and ransom, for God, the most just judge, would not accept of an imperfect satisfaction, or give testimony that he was well pleased with it. But that Christ's person and sacrifice was approved of God is evident, not only as he appointed it; and surely he will accept what he hath appointed; not only also by the miracles which he wrought when alive, which evidenced his commission: Acts ii. 22, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you;' but chiefly by the resurrection of Christ, which was not only a testimony of the truth and dignity of his person: Rom. i. 4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;' but it was a clear argument of the perfectness of his satisfaction; for unless he had abundantly satisfied God, how could God, who, as a just judge, had appointed him to die for our sins, raise him up from the dead? Would an upright judge deliver a debtor or his surety from prison unless first full payment had been made? Would God show himself willing to be reconciled to us if yet there remained any wrath to be appeased, any farther ransom necessary to be paid for us? Now in the scripture Christ is sometimes said to rise from the dead to show his divine power; sometimes to be raised by God to show the fulness of his satisfaction: Acts ii. 24, 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of them.' When Christ was raised, our surety was let out of prison; and the scripture hath delivered it to us under that notion: Isa. liii. 8, 'He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.' The Lord sent an angel to remove his gravestone, not to supply any lack of power in Christ, but to show he was fully appeased and satisfied. Therefore it is said, Heb. xiii. 20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' Mark, through the blood of the everlasting covenant he is become the God of peace; through the blood of the everlasting covenant he brought Christ from the dead. He doth not only do us good, but lets go our surety through the virtue of that blood. The phrase of 'bringing again from the dead,' is emphatical. Christ did not break prison, but was brought forth as the apostles, Acts xvi. 39; the magistrates came to the prison 'and brought them out.' Christ rose not only by his own power, but by the Father's authority. If our surety had perished in prison, we could have no assurance; or if he had continued still under death, the world could have no discharge; but Christ rose again, and is not only taken out of prison, but carried up to God in glory and honour: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Received up into glory.' It is not *ἀνέθη*, actively he ascended, but *ἀναλήφθη*, passively he was raised up. God hath rewarded him; and therefore he hath perfectly done his work. God hath not only taken him out of the grave, but taken him up to glory. Certainly God is well pleased since he hath



given him not only a discharge, but a reward. Christ undertaking for us is somewhat like that of Reuben for Benjamin: Gen. xliii. 9, 'I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.' 'Let me see thy face no more.' Christ undertook to carry it through, and failed not in the enterprise.

III. What comfort is this to poor sinners, since, though there be a full satisfaction, conditions are required which we are not able to perform, ere we can have benefit; and we find sin remaining in us, so that it is finished, and unfinished as to us?

I answer—There is great comfort in God's general grace, before it be particularly applied and exhibited to us in the effects and sense thereof. A sufficient sacrifice and ransom given for you is the foundation of all solid peace, for it is the foundation of the gospel, or of the covenant of grace. I shall prove it by these reasons—

1. Because this answereth the grand scruple which haunteth the creature, and is at the bottom of all our fears; namely, how God's justice shall be appeased: Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' The way of appeasing God's anger hath been an old controversy, that hath troubled all nations; and till it be answered and fully determined, man is not 'perfect as appertaining to the conscience,' Heb. ix. 9. Though God be infinitely merciful, yet he is infinitely just; and we can expect no more from his mercy than we may fear from his justice. Guilty nature still presageth evil to us, till there be something penal endured, and something of price and value given to appease justice.

2. That God now looketh for no satisfaction at your hand; it is all done perfectly by Christ; all is finished. He satisfied for us that we might not be obliged to satisfy in our own persons: Heb. i. 3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;' Isa. liii. 5, 'By his stripes we are healed.' It was at his cost that our recovery was brought about.

3. In this provision we see the will of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that could be imagined: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh;' 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This is such an unusual expression of love, such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it. When God laid such a broad foundation, surely he intended some notable grace to us.

4. Here is a full answer to those usual objections which are raised by broken hearts, as the number, and greatness, and heinousness of our sins; for as such they shall not be your ruin. As great as they are, God can with honour pardon them; for barely to plead the number of sins or greatness of sins, is to lessen the price. The Messiah came, Dan. ix. 24, 'To finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to

bring in everlasting righteousness.' There is no sin so great but the Redeemer's merit can countervail it. And no man shall perish for the want of the payment of his ransom, or an expiatory sacrifice for his sins. He may perish for his impenitency and unbelief, but not merely for the greatness of his sin; for what sin is so great that it is not or cannot be expiated by the blood of Christ? Christ's satisfaction maketh the salvation of the worst possible; you may have peace with God if you will.

5. It bindeth our duty the closer upon us. No man shall perish but for want of a willing heart to accept of the Redeemer, who hath paid our ransom, and of the grace which he hath brought to us, by which we may be interested and instated in the benefits of this ransom. All things are ready if we are ready: Luke xiv. 17, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' God's fatlings are killed, his wines are mingled; if we will not come to the feast, we perish through our own default. We need confer nothing; all is but to receive the benefits propounded and offered; victory over death, hell, sin, Satan, is ready; yea, heaven is ready, and all spiritual blessings are ready, if we are ready; for the merit and satisfaction of Christ is the great cause of all that blessedness which is offered to the creature. God hath opened the way to all; if they will not enter into it, they perish by their own default. He hath sent preachers into all the world: Mark xvi. 15, 16, 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' Titus ii. 11, 'For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.' Let us not refuse our cure, though we must take a bitter potion, though we must enter in by the strait gate of faith and repentance, and walk in the narrow way of self-denial, and all holy conversation, and godliness; yet because it is to life, and the legal exclusion is taken off, let us enter and walk in it. Indeed, if the door were shut against us by the sentence of the law, and there was no way to remove the bars and bolts, our excuse were more just, because then our condition would be hopeless. But now all is finished, salvation rendered possible; now God hath taken away the bars and bolts by which his law shut us out from all hope; let us not set up bars and bolts by our own unbelief and by our own cowardly fears. If man were not man, but a beast, or a fool, or a madman, it might more excusably be allowed to them to be led by sense and appetite, and then it were an intolerable thing to crucify the flesh, with the affections thereof; but man, having reason, doth know, or may know, that this command of God is equal; that God doth not only require, but help us to perform it, and prevent us by his grace.

6. It doth not only bind our duty upon us, but it encourages us to repent and believe and obey; for Christ is 'able to save to the utmost all those that come to God by him,' Heb. vii. 25; and he is 'the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii. 2; and doth 'give repentance as well as remission of sins,' Acts v. 31; 'For to you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,' Phil. i. 29. The first grace is his gift, and his resolved gift to the elect, but all are to take their lot. If it were said to us alone that we should strive to enter in at the strait gate, or that we alone should deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him, it



were hard ; but when the same terms are propounded to all, and when many, young and old, rich and poor, have received them, and have tried God's ways, and it hath succeeded well with them upon trial, why should we fear it ? If nobody had done it, or could do it, then we might stick at God's terms. This argument Austin used to himself in his conflicts of conscience, lib. viii. Confess. chap. 11. When he had long withstood offers of grace, he would then propound to himself the example of others : *Cur non poteris quod isti, et istæ ? Isti et istæ non in se pouterunt, sed in Domino Deo suo*—Why may not I, as well as those holy men and those good women ? They did it not in themselves, but in the strength of their God, and the power of his grace. The yoke of Christ will be more easy than we think of, especially when it is lined with grace.

7. When we have once accepted the condition, cleared up our title, then we shall have cause to glory in the Lord, and be sensible indeed that all things are finished which are necessary to our comfort and peace, and that this was a full merit ; as Paul would glory in the cross of Christ : Gal. vi. 14, ' God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; ' Rom. viii. 1, ' There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ. ' Then we shall make the bold challenge of faith : Rom. viii. 33, 34, ' Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? it is God that justifieth ; who is he that condemneth ? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ' If Christ had not made a full expiation of all our sins, we were under condemnation still. He doth not say, There is nothing worthy of condemnation in believers ; for as long as sin and the flesh remaineth in us (which doth as long as we live in the world), there is a potential guilt of damnation, an intrinsic merit in our actions of death and condemnation ; yet the actual guilt or obligation is taken away, because Christ is made a curse for us. Well, then, our solid rejoicing to the last is in this complete satisfaction : Rom. v. 11, ' We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement ; it is *καυχώμενοι*, we glory in God.

*Use.* Let this raise in us—

1. An hearty thankfulness and admiration of the love of Christ, who would not give over suffering till he could say, ' It is finished ; ' till he had done enough to glorify God and save the creature ; enough for the destruction of sin, as well as the abolition of the curse. Christ did not compound, but paid the utmost farthing. Oh, let us raise our thoughts in the consideration of this love. His enemies interrupted him, and tempted him to give over : ' Save thyself ; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross, ' Mat. xxvii. 40, 42 ; ' If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. ' But because he was the Son of God and the king of Israel, he would not come down till he was taken down, and all was done that was necessary : ' All God's works are perfect, ' Deut. xxxii. 4. The Father ceased not till, upon the sixth day, he had perfected the work of the creation, and upon the seventh day he rested ; so Christ will not come down till he had finished the work of redemption on the sixth day, and on the seventh he rested in the grave, and rose early in the morning on the

first day of the week, to show the truth of his satisfaction. And the Holy Ghost's work is perfect; all the time of this life he continueth increasing our graces, but in the everlasting sabbatism, when sin shall be no more, his work is brought to an end; and then he shall 'present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,' Jude 24.

But what were the reasons why Christ would not give over till all was perfected?

[1.] Love to his Father: John xviii. 11, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' Christ loved the Father with unspeakable love, and was in like manner beloved by him. Therefore when this cup was put into his hands by his Father, he would drink it off to the very bottom.

[2.] Love to the church: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word,' &c.; and Rev. i. 5, 6, 'To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' The church was given for a spouse to Christ, but we were polluted and defiled with sin; he would not only cleanse it, but make it a 'glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,' Eph. v. 27. Christ loved the church, and therefore it was not grievous to him to wash it with his blood. Because Jacob loved Rachel, he served seven years for her in heats and frosts by night and day, and 'they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her,' Gen. xxix. 20; so the Son of God loved the church, and therefore endured all these indignities and grievous passions.

[3.] He had respect to that eminent glory set before him: Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Though the way was rough, the prize was excellent; and so he ran through all the pain and shame, and attained the eternal crown of glory. He endured cruel pains in his body, and bitter sorrows in his soul, such as never any man did suffer, never any angel could have borne as he did; so dear did it cost our Saviour to make a propitiation for our sins. That which in all this did strengthen and encourage him was the joy set before him, namely, that happy and glorious estate which followed upon his sufferings, so that his burden was made the lighter, and his sorrows much abated. Oh, let us think of this! It is not a lessening his love to us, for he needed not to put himself into this condition. Herein he was our example, to teach us how to sweeten the cross; and as our Mediator he is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us: John xiv. 2, 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.'

2. Let it raise in us a confidence of the benefits purchased. For Christ expresseth himself as a conqueror, and in a kind of triumph over the devil and all the enemies of our salvation. The wrath of God is appeased: Rom. v. 9, 'Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' The law is satisfied: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made



under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' Satan is vanquished : John xii. 31, 'Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' Guilt is removed : Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' Sin is subdued : Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' Death is unstinged : 1 Cor. xv. 55-57, 'O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The curse is removed : Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Surely where Christ beginneth he will make an end. We cannot have too high thoughts of the blood of Christ : Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.' Let us stand still now, and behold the salvation of God, and echo to Christ's cry, 'It is finished ! it is finished !' What can the law crave more than the blood of the Son of God ? What will make us perfect as appertaining to the conscience if this will not ? Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Christ hath so far obtained pardon and acceptance for us, that he hath made an end of sin for all that are willing to accept of his grace upon God's terms.

3. Let it quicken us to perseverance in our duty, notwithstanding sufferings, till all be ended ; that, when we come to die, we may be able to say, John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on earth ; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do ;' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' If Christ out of love to us would finish the work of our redemption, 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ ?' Rom. viii. 39.

4. It teacheth us how to comfort ourselves in death. It finisheth all our labours and sorrows, as Christ showeth when he was about to give up the ghost : Isa. lvii. 2, 'He shall enter into peace ; they shall rest in their beds.' Believers have a joy set before them as well as Christ. The wicked cannot say, 'It is finished ;' their evils are then begun.

5. Let us believe things to come. The event showeth that all those things were true which the prophets had so long before foretold. The Holy Ghost cannot be deceived, nor can God lie. We are certain that things yet to come shall be fulfilled as well as these which are past. Those who lived before Christ's time had not such an experiment of God's truth as we have. We have seen the coming of Christ ; let us so fix our minds on future things, as to draw them off from earthly.

*He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*—I come to the latter part of the text. Some read it that first he died, and then bowed the head, there being no spirit left to support it ; but Christ first bowed the head, and then died ; he did as it were beckon to death to come and do its office : 'He yielded up the ghost ;' his soul was truly

separated from his body. The form of resignation we have, Luke xxiii. 46, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' Wicked men, because they die against their wills, their souls are said to be taken away: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee;' Job xxvii. 8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' But Christ yieldeth it up; and for a godly man to give up the ghost noteth his faith, submission, and willingness to depart out of the body. As the prophet saith of Christ, Isa. liii. 12, 'He hath poured out his soul unto death.' Death did not surprise him.

*Doct.* When all things were finished, Christ freely and willingly gave up the ghost.

His life was not taken away, but resigned; there was much of violence, but no coaction. The term, giving up the ghost, doth not imply the bare death of Christ, but that he died willingly and freely. *Nihil in hoc Christo est, nisi profusa liberalitas misericordiæ, et remissionis peccatorum*—I can see nothing in this Christ but a prodigality of love and mercy. He had freely emptied his veins in the garden; every pore became an eye, and wept blood for your sakes; and now he cometh to pour out his soul.

Reasons why Christ was so willing to die.

1. Out of obedience to his Father. The divine decrees had laid a necessity upon him, and where the Father saith, Must, Christ saith, I will: Mat. xxvi. 54, 55, 'Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' (which was the just number of a Roman army); 'But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' Christ willingly took this necessity upon him; it was but *necessitas ex hypothesi*. Had it not been for his eternal consent it would never have been said, 'Thus it must be;' Luke xxii. 37, 'This that is written must be accomplished;' Luke xxiv. 46, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to suffer.' It was a necessity of his own making; he was not compelled to accept of the conditions from God, nor forced by the violence of man to yield up his life: John x. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father.'

2. Out of love to us. The Jews crucified him, but love made him die; we had else perished for ever. The law laid it upon us, but love made Christ take it upon himself: Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Justice demanded it of us, but Christ said, I will be responsible; exact it of me: Mat. xx. 28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He took life to lay it down at the demand of justice. Justice said, I must have a ransom; Christ said, Take it of me; let these go: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Then he is gracious unto them, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' The Father received it, and Christ paid it; as the angel said to Abraham, Gen. xxii. 12, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him.' Justice would have reached forth a deadly stroke to us, but Christ caught the blow.



3. This would finish his labours. Death was Christ's last enemy, of his person, as well as of his kingdom. He had been harassed and worn out with sorrows; the grave was a place of rest; it was finished as to him: Isa. lvii. 2, 'He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.' Death was the end of Christ's journey, and all his labours in the flesh. The grave was a dark dismal place till Christ went into it; ever since it is but a chamber of rest, and Christ keepeth the key of it: Isa. xxvi. 20, 'Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment.'

4. This furthered his triumph, and made it every way more complete. By dying, Christ carried the war into his enemies' land, and foiled death in its own territory, and made death itself mortal by lying in the grave. The cross and the grave were the means of Christ's triumph; by these the devil thought to foil him, and by these he triumphed: he conquered Satan and sin when they seemed to have most power upon him; like angry bees, they stung him, and disarmed themselves: Heb. ii. 14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;' Col. ii. 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,' *ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., σταυρῷ*. On the cross: Eph. ii. 16, 'Having slain the enmity thereby;' that is, by his cross, formerly spoken of. When he was slain himself, then he slew death and the law. Christ's crucifying was his exaltation and preferment. It is twice expressed by lifting up: John iii. 14, 'So shall the Son of man be lifted up;' John xii. 32, 33, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men after me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.' The grave was consecrated and sanctified by Christ's lying there. *Duo in cruce affixi intelliguntur*, saith Origen; *Christus visibiliter sponte sua ad tempus, diabolus invisibiliter invitatus in perpetuum*—There were two crucified at once; Christ visibly of his own accord, for a time only; the devil invisibly, against his will for ever. Christ received a slight hurt in his heel, but he bruised Satan's head.

5. He was hastening to his own glory: Heb. xii. 2, 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' He was thinking of his welcome to heaven. Oh, what sweet embraces there would be between the Father and him! Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool;' Dan. vii. 13, 14, 'I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' How the angels should usher him into glory, though there were two left with shining garments to give satisfaction to his disciples! Acts i. 10, 11, 'While they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which said, Ye men of Galilee! why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so return in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' Christ was thinking

how his Father would embrace him, put the crown upon his head, bid him sit down at his right hand, and how there he was to be royally attended. And this doth not derogate from his love to us, for he went to prepare a place for us, and, as our forerunner, is entered into glory, and because he lives, we shall live also.

*Use 1.* To commend the love of Christ to us.

1. That he should die, this was an incomparable condescension of his love. Simeon suffered himself to be bound for his brethren, Gen. xlii. 24; Lot proffers his daughters to save his guests, Gen. xix. 8; but Christ would lay down his life. If it were in our choice, who would die? Who would be tumbled into a pit of darkness, a cold hole, where he should see the sun no more? We would live for ever. It is not put to our choice, but it is in our wishes. But Christ might have chosen whether he would die or no, and yet he died.

2. Christ had more reason to love his life than we have. He had a delicate body, and the social presence of the Godhead. The poorest worm in the world desires to keep its life: Job ii. 4, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;' that is, a man would part with all, for skins were the barter of those days. And the more excellent the life is, the more desire men have to keep it; as young men, whose marrow is in their bones, to them life is life indeed. The woman that was broken and spent with old age yet spent *ὅλον τὸν βίον*, 'all her living on physicians,' Luke viii. 43. Christ had reason to love life upon a natural respect; he was about thirty-three years old; and upon a spiritual respect, his human nature enjoyed the near presence of the godhead; but when he was in his full vigour and strength, he willingly died.

3. That death which he died was a sad bloody death, the saddest death that any man could die. He was weakened with the agonies in the garden: 'They pierced his hands and his feet,' Ps. xxii. 16. The sinewy parts of his body were pierced with nails, his life dropping out by degrees; the irons opened a passage for his soul. And, which was more than all, he suffered under the wrath of God: Mat. xxvii. 46, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?'

4. It was a shameful death; he suffered as a malefactor: Isa. liii. 12, 'He was numbered with the transgressors.' He was crucified between two thieves, *in medio latronum, tanquam latronum maximus*, as if he were the greatest of them. He was treated as a sinner; we are made the sons of God. Job was called hypocrite by his friends, but he would maintain his righteousness till death: Job xxvii. 6, 'My righteousness will I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Eusebius Vercellensis chose rather to starve in prison than that it should be said he had eaten with the Arians. Christ takes it patiently to die as a thief, an impostor, a traitor: John xviii. 30, 'If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.' The high priest charged him with blasphemy: Mat. xxvi. 65, 'Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy.' The disciples began to doubt of him, and to look on him as an impostor: Luke xxiv. 21, 'We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.'



By God himself, when he had taken our sins upon him, he was dealt with as a transgressor: 1 Peter iv. 1, 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' He was as a sinner before: Heb. ix. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' An ingenuous man valueth his good name above all enjoyments; there was enough to clear Christ's innocency, yet in the repute of the world he suffered as a malefactor. Oh, how unlike is Christ to the men of the world! Christ is innocent, and accounted a transgressor; they are transgressors, yet would fain be accounted innocent; as Saul said to Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 30, 'I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel.' We are more careful of credit than conscience, and would not be accounted sinners, yet do not fear to be so. What a comfort is this to believers, that Satan cannot lay more to your charge than his instruments did to Jesus Christ.

5. He submitted to this death most willingly. He thirsted, and longed to pay the ransom for us; here was not so much pain and shame as there was willingness: Gal. i. 4, 'Who gave himself for our sins.' There was not only the acts of the Father in giving Christ, but a peculiar act of Christ: 'He gave himself.' How freely did Christ empty his veins, and let out his soul! It was no more to Christ to pour out his soul than for the minister to pour out the wine. We pray as if we were afraid to be heard; we hear as if we were loath to be saved; we serve God as if we were loath to please him; there is a grudging in our acts of duty; but Christ was free, and willing to die for us.

6. His blood was spilt in malice; it might have cried for vengeance, yet it crieth for pardon; it had the perfume of an infinite merit: Heb. xii. 24, 'The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel.' As to Abel's blood, that crieth for vengeance: Gen. iv. 10, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.' Christ's blood cries for pardon. As to the actors, his blood would not have been a curse to them if they had hearkened to the voice of the gospel. But to speak of ourselves; we by our sins had made our Lord to serve and die, yet doth not his blood speak against us, as Abel's did against Cain; but it speaks to God, to pacify his wrath and to pardon us. Our sins cry, Lord, forgive not: Isa. ii. 9, 'The mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself; therefore forgive them not.' They speak in our conscience, Ye deserve death; but Christ's blood speaketh words of peace and comfort to cleanse it, and make it quiet. When wrath is ready to break out from justice, it still crieth, Father, it is finished; Christ's blood yet speaketh. When the awakened conscience lies in fear of the offended judge, and is vexed with the restless accusations of Satan, the blood of Christ speaketh better things, viz., It is all forgiven; it is all expiated by my merit.

Use 2. This affords much comfort to humbled sinners. Take Christ as freely as he freely offereth himself for you. He resigned up himself to death, and will not you resign up yourselves by faith? He poured out his soul to death, and will not you pour out your souls into his bosom? Consider, all the persons of the Trinity are willing, and will not you? The Father gave him: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' Christ gave himself: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The Spirit is willing;

he is grieved with your neglect and refusal : Mat. xxiii. 37, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not !' Oh, pour out your souls in faith and prayer, as Christ did his upon the cross.

*Use 3.* Let us learn to imitate Christ. At the close of his life he said, 'It is finished,' and so 'bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.' Believers have a joy set before them as well as Christ. It is not so with wicked men ; they cannot say that with them it is begun ; their heaven endeth when they come to die ; but God's people should take death cheerfully, if they can say, as Christ, John xvii. 4, 'Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.' Let the death be violent or natural, it is all one whether we are a peace-offering or a burnt-offering ; there is more of man's malice in a violent death, but it cannot hurt us. But alas ! men generally do not live as if they did look to die, and therefore they do not die as if they did look to live ; and so here they would not die. and there they would not live.

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## SERMON UPON ECCLESIASTES VII. 29.

*But they sought out many inventions.*—ECCLES. vii. 29.

THERE are two things in this scripture—

1. The righteousness of God in his work about men, ‘God made man upright.’

2. Man’s perverse subtlety in inventing ways of backsliding and apostasy from God, ‘But they sought out many inventions.’

From this latter part observe—

*Doct.* That man fell from the integrity of his first estate, and is ever since full of evil and fruitless inventions.

I. I shall speak to this point as it is represented in the text.

II. Give some considerations as to the general case.

1. The persons, ‘they.’ The expression was singular before, ‘God made Adam upright;’ but now plural, not only to include both our first parents, but all their posterity. Adam had his invention, and all his posterity theirs. The devil inspired Adam with a sad and doleful invention, to go about to find out another happiness than God had appointed. Adam could not content himself with this kind of happiness, but fancied to himself an higher perfection, and yielded to follow these new devised ways of blessedness which Satan and his own deceived heart did suggest to him; and this invention hath invented and found out all the sin and misery under which the world groaneth. As Adam had his invention, so all his posterity theirs; we are inventing still to make ourselves more miserable. The least ebullitions of sin are expressed in the old testament by ‘imaginations;’ in the new by ‘lusts.’ In the old testament by ‘imaginations;’ Jer. xviii. 12, ‘And they said, There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;’ Gen. vi. 5, ‘And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’ In the new by ‘lusts;’ James i. 14, ‘But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed;’ Titus iii. 3, ‘For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts.’ Not only the desiring, but the understanding faculty is corrupt; therefore it is said, Prov. i. 31, ‘They shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices;’ Jer. vi. 19, ‘Behold, I will bring upon this people even the fruit of their thoughts;’ meaning the evil which their own devices and practices had procured to themselves. Every one of us has our devices, ways,

and haunts of sin, whereby we make ourselves more wretched and sinful.

2. Their act, 'They sought out;' that sheweth the voluntariness and studiousness of man's defection; it is their own act and deed, and their hearts are set upon it. It is said, Jonah ii. 8, 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.' They set their minds a-work, prostitute their reason to their senses. All men's projects, what do they tend to but the satisfaction of their own lusts, to cater for the body, and gratify the animal life? 'Making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,' Rom. xiii. 14; 'Taking thought what they shall eat or what they shall drink,' Mat. vi. 25. Their care is about the base and brutish part more than about the soul, how to adorn the body and gratify the body; and for this the soul must be made a slave. There is a perverse diligence in men to corrupt themselves.

3. The object, with its number, 'Many inventions.' There is some difference in the translations. Ludovicus de Dieu, because the word for 'many' signifieth also 'great' and 'mighty,' rendereth it, *Ipsi autem quæsierunt cogitationes magnatum*; meaning by the 'mighty' the angels who were not contented with their own station, but forsook it, Jude 6. Certain it is the devil's first temptation was, Gen. iii. 5, 'Ye shall be as gods;' that is, advance into a more honourable and noble condition than now you are in. These thoughts being suggested by Satan, they ambitiously entertained them. The vulgar readeth it, *Se infinitis miscuit questionibus*. Adam at first out of curiosity would know good and evil, and ever since we have been sick of questions, questioning this and questioning that, and have no clear light to guide us. The Septuagint render it, ἐξήτησαν λογισμούς πολλούς, they sought out many ratiocinations. We grope in a maze of uncertainties, and so entangle ourselves the more. Our heavenly wisdom is lost by our sin and rebellion, and instead thereof we have gotten a false carnal wisdom, which is 'enmity to God,' Rom. viii. 7, and only inclineth us to a false happiness, James iii. 15, to the pleasures, honours, and profits of the present world; and so are given up to an injudicious mind, and are left in the hands of our own counsel, which is the heaviest plague that can light upon a reasonable creature: Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12, 'But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.' For our own wisdom is an ill guide and counsellor, and will never guide us aright in the way to true happiness, but lead us into bogs and pits, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.

But keeping more closely to our own translation, let me a little open this expression, 'They sought out many inventions.'

*First*, Observe that man is left to invent, and (since he left the straight line of God's directions) to shift for an happiness for himself. Surely it was better for us when we needed only to accept or submit; we never sped well since we would be our own carvers, and would follow those new ways to blessedness which Satan and our own hearts suggest to us; as a runagate child or servant, that is not content with the father's or master's finding, is driven to a thousand shifts. All our inventions may be disproved by a double reason—

1. They are insufficient to make us happy. We were made for God,



and cannot be happy again till we return to God. Being fallen from God, in whose favour alone true happiness is to be found, we invent false ways wherein we seek to attain happiness; but after all our vain pursuits, we can nowhere find rest for our souls. We have but a little vainglory for that eternal glory which we have lost, a little brutish pleasure for that fulness of joy which we might have in God's presence, perishing vanities for the true riches; so that we do but go about: Jer. xxxi. 22, 'How long wilt thou go about, O backsliding daughter?' We do but weary ourselves as long as we keep off from God; you meet with a broken cistern instead of the fountain: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' You may drink many a puddle dry, and yet never quench your thirst; labour your hearts out, and yet not meet with that which satisfieth: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' True rest and peace will only be found in God reconciled to us in Christ.

2. They plunge us in farther misery. It is true both as to opinions in religion and as to practice.

[1.] As to opinions in religion. If men apprehend some misery, how vain are their inventions about the remedy! All their devices show how desperate the disease is. The philosophers, when they had found out a god, yet were 'vain in their imaginations,' Rom. i. 21; when they sat abroad on a religion, they hatched nothing but what was ridiculous: 'And professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.' The Egyptians, who vaunted themselves to be the fathers of all sciences, worshipped onions and leeks, and their gods grew in their gardens; they were planted and cultivated by their labourers before they were worshipped by their princes. The Romans, who excelled all nations for their morality and civility, made gods of all things, for war and peace, fears and passions, agues and fevers. And still the religion of heathens, Turks, and pagans are so far from being the remedy, that they are a part of the disease, and remove man further off from God. All men's inventions to pacify God's wrath do further provoke him: Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Go to, false christians! it was never well with the world since men were guided by inventions rather than institutions; while they hope by their own penances and exterior mortifications to appease God, he is the more alienated from them.

[2.] So as to practice. Whilst instead of dependance and downright simplicity they fly to their own shifts, and will help themselves rather than trust God, they involve themselves the more. There is one principle of sincerity, to depend upon God's all-sufficiency: Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' But they that do not trust God cannot be true to him. When men will be in-

venting, and shift for their own happiness, they never carve to themselves a good portion, but have enough of their devices at last. Besides, our false happiness which we pursue after, and our inventions about it, are not only vain, but pernicious and destructive: John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' If we love our own dark counsels rather than God's provision 'for us and the remedy offered to us, our case is the more doleful.

*Secondly*, Observe, these inventions are many. Here I shall inquire—(1.) What are these inventions? (2.) Why many?

First, What are these inventions? We must distinguish—

1. There are profitable inventions for the good of society and benefit of mankind, such as are civil arts and disciplines, manufacture and occupations, which conduce much to the good of the present world, and do repair those natural defects which were introduced by the fall. Now, though these are not intended in this place, yet two things I shall say upon this occasion—

[1.] The one is, that if man would have been contented to be at God's finding, many of these would not have been needed; such a deal of do would not have been needful to man in innocency. It is sin hath made so many necessities, and lust still multiplieth them.

[2.] The other is, that though since the fall we can find some remedy for our natural defects, yet for the spiritual distempers of the heart we can find no cure. By art man can melt the hardest metals, and make them capable of any form, but to soften the heart, and make it capable of God's image, that is past the skill of men or angels. There is no creature so fierce but 'it is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind,' James iii. 7; but yet man cannot tame his own heart; it is God must turn us, or we are never turned. How many inventions hath man found out to repair the ruins of the fall! Grammar and rhetoric to polish our speech, logic to refine our reason, ethics to reform our manners in civil converse, economics to govern families, politics to model kingdoms and commonwealths; but nothing to tame and subdue the heart to God? It is God that 'createth in us a clean heart, and reneweth a right spirit,' Ps. li. 10; even he that made it at first.

2. There are sinful inventions, taken in a more limited sense, for those exquisite studied ways of sin wherewith many please themselves; as we read of some that were 'inventors of evil things,' Rom. i. 30, who find out such wickedness as the world was never acquainted with before; as new-fashioned oaths, lusts, torments. This argueth the height of wickedness; and such are the more corrupt of the corrupt sort of men. These are not principally intended in this place, yet may be comprised here.

3. The inventions here intended are such as by which we start away from God and corrupt ourselves. This more general sense of the words compriseth two sorts of inventions—

[1.] Those many crooked counsels and devices whereunto men are carried by their own corrupt hearts, when once they had forsaken God and the straight rule of his law. We read, Jer. xvii. 9, 'That the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' There is a bottomless, unsearchable depth of wickedness



in the heart of man, which none can discover but God ; it is wily, fraudulent, prone to deceive, full of windings and turnings, wiles and sleights ; no creature in wicked subtlety and dissembling can go beyond him. The scripture delighteth in this term, 'inventions' and 'imaginations ;' Gen. vi. 5, 'All the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually ;' and Jer. xviii. 12, 'We will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imaginations of his evil heart.' The heart of man is in continual action, framing and moulding things within itself ; and because there are many cunning fetches and secret devices within the heart, by which they seek to put out their own eyes, that they may not apprehend themselves to be so vile and filthy as indeed they are, and a deceitful heart smooths evil, and presents it under another notion, therefore they may be called, and are in scripture called, 'devices' and 'inventions.' There is so much remainder of light and conscience since the fall, that there needeth a great deal of craft to varnish sin, to insinuate it with any satisfaction to the conscience ; a great deal of diligence to compass it, and a great deal of art to hide it from the world, that it may not make us hateful or obnoxious to disgrace and disrespect ; and to hide it from ourselves, that we may live in it with greater leave and allowance from those remainders of reason which are yet left within us. True wisdom is plain and simple ; it needeth no disguises to palliate it from the judgment of conscience or the notice of the world : 'Wisdom is justified of her children ;' Mat. xi. 19, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,' 2 Cor. i. 12. But with sin it is not so ; there are many inventions for the hiding, palliating, excusing, and defending of sin ; it is the great power of the word to discover them : Heb. iv. 12, 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' These are the most secret acts of the soul. Intentions respect the end, thoughts respect consultations about the means. There is an artificial dexterous managery of sin : Eph. ii. 3, 'Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,' *θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν*, that is, imaginations and lusts. Now of these inventions I shall say two things—

(1.) The more studiously and dexterously any sin is carried on, it argueth the worse temper of spirit, and the sin is the more aggravated : 'To be wise to do evil,' Jer. iv. 22 ; 'To devise iniquity, and work evil upon our beds,' Micah ii. 1 ; 'The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth,' Ps. xxxvii. 12. The subtle designer of sin is worse than he that occasionally lapseth into it. The good may be overtaken or overborne, but to dig deep to hide our wickedness, and sit abroad upon it, is the greatest evil.

(2.) That sinful inventions for the hiding and palliating of sin never succeed well, but involve us the more. I shall not instance in the worst of men, how they are forced to add sin to sin, and help out one wickedness with another, which at last bringeth upon them the feared evil with the greater violence ; but even in the best of men, that you may the more loath these sinful inventions. David had many inventions to

cloak his sin with Bathsheba, but how ill did they succeed at last ! When sin hath got a tie upon a man, and a man hath done some evil from which he cannot well acquit himself but with some loss and shame or other inconvenience, then it is a mighty snare, unless he cover it or maintain it, or some other way help himself by adding some other sin to it. Thus usually in this case men have their inventions, shift off a fault with a lie, and imagine it in a sort necessary for their safety to be evil ; and out of this seeming necessity heap and pile up sin upon sin, and transgression upon transgression. This, I say, was David's case in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah. Surely he had never proceeded to such black thoughts, to plot the murder of a person so worthy and innocent, but to salve his credit and cover his dishonest act, when other arts and shifts failed and took no effect. Admit one sin, and the devil taketh this advantage, that he will force us for the defence of that to yield to more. Thus Sarah's unbelieving laughter brought forth a lie : Gen. xviii. 12-15, ' Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not ; for she was afraid.' Peter, when he had denied his master with a plain single denial, ' I know not the man,' Mat. xxvi. 70, he proceedeth after to a denial with oaths and execrations : ' Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man,' ver. 74. If he had prevented the first sin with ordinary courage and boldness, he had not thus entangled himself ; but one sin must help out another, though still to our loss and trouble. Eudoxia, wife to Theodosius junior, having received of the emperor her husband an apple of incredible beauty and bigness, gave it to one Paulinus, a learned man, whom she prized ; he, not knowing whence the empress had received it, presents it as a rare gift to the emperor, who thereupon sending for his wife, asked her for the apple ; she, fearing her husband's displeasure if she should say she had given it away, answered she had eaten it ; upon this afterwards the emperor produceth it, and in his jealousy killeth innocent Paulinus, and hateth his wife. If she had not told an untruth at first, she had not fallen into the sin of lying ; but giving way a little, she is drawn into a greater sin, her innocent friend lost his life, and she her husband's favour ever afterwards. All this is spoken that we may beware of evil inventions, which never succeed well, nor to the content of the party that useth them.

[2.] These inventions are put for our pursuits after a false happiness. True happiness is only to be found in the favour of God, and in the way appointed by God ; but man would be at his own dispose, and would invent and find out an happiness for himself, and be sufficient to himself for his own blessedness, without any dependence upon God. Now, when man was thus fallen off from God, God was disobliged from providing for him, and so man is left to his own shifts. But alas ! how ill doth he provide for himself ! This being the very thing intended in the text, I shall a little more amply dilate upon it in several propositions.

(1.) When man fell from God, he fell from him *tanquam a principio et fine*, from dependence upon him as the first cause, and respect to him as his chief good and last end. His dependence was loosened, because he distrusted God's provision for him, and would be a god to himself, his own principle, rule, and end ; live from himself to himself,



according to his own will. So that self-love came in the place of love to God; he that before sought nothing but God, began now to seek himself, and thought he should find in himself what he lost in God.

(2.) Man being once off from God, never of himself cometh on again, but rangeth infinitely, being guided by his own will and wit: Jonah ii. 8, 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.' Man being fastened to such objects as he liketh, keepeth aloof from God, whom he liketh not, and will not come at him as long as he can make a shift without him: Jer. ii. 31, 'We are lords; we will come no more unto thee.' And though he wandereth hither and thither, he finds no rest for his soul, for he seeketh happiness where it is not to be found, in the riches, honours, and pleasures of the present life.

(3.) Though he meet with often disappointments, yet he is unwilling to return even after God hath showed a remedy, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel, in which way he may have peace and happiness, and so rest for his soul. God hath showed us the way to rest: Jer. vi. 16, 'Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' But yet man is for his shifts still, till God changeth his heart and giveth him counsel in his reins, and disappoints him in his worldly inventions and pursuits, by blasting the creature, or occasioning some wound in his conscience. God speaketh often in his word, but it is disregarded till he speak by real arguments, and speak to the quick, so as to force an hearing; till he take away their comforts, or take away their use of them, by some languishing sickness or anguish in their own conscience, or both; by smiting them with a rod dipped in guilt: 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth,' Ps. xxxix. 11; so that then they see the fruitlessness of all their inventions, their vain pleasures, costly buildings, great honour and riches, how little these can stand them against the wrath of an angry God. So loath is man to submit to God's remedy; he laboureth all that he can to patch up his sorry happiness, and is very unwilling to confess his misery; he turneth and windeth every way, and seeketh help from the creature before he will be brought to implore aid from grace; he will use all means within his grasp and reach, till his despair teach him to return from whence he fell, and that it is better to seek God's favour than continue his vain pursuits: Hosea ii. 7, 'I will return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.'

Secondly, Why many inventions?

1. In opposition to that one straight line which leadeth to true happiness. Christ telleth us, 'One thing is necessary,' Luke x. 42, namely, to serve and please God, and enjoy him for ever. To enjoy God and please him is that one thing which is enough. But error is manifold; though there be but one path to heaven, yet there are many ways of sinning and going to hell. Every man hath his several course and way of sinning: Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;' according to the several constitutions and business and affairs of men. *Velle suum cuique est, nec voto vivitur uno.* As the channel is cut, so corrupt nature in every

man findeth an issue and passage. No sin cometh amiss to a carnal heart, yet some are more kindly and suitable; one is worldly, another sensual, another proud and ambitious. It is our wisdom to observe our own haunt, and the tender parts of our souls: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' All sin is but carnal self-love disguised; or many, with respect to the successive entertainment of divers sins: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Sins take the throne by turns. By age and experience men grow weary of former vanities, but others are adopted into their room, and so their lusts are but exchanged, not abrogated. Now we are fallen from our primitive happiness, we multiply means and cares; yea, at the same time the pleasures of the flesh draw the sinner several ways: James iv. 1, 'Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, which war in your members?' Desire of riches contradicts idleness, and the toilsome cares and labours of this world that ease which the flesh affecteth; disgraceful lusts are contradicted by ambition and pride.

2. Many inventions, in opposition to that simplicity and singleness of heart which original rectitude did include. The heart of man was originally of one constant, uniform frame; but now, instead of simplicity, there is a multiplicity. The heart now is never right till it be one with God. Therefore David prays, Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' He begs a heart entirely fixed upon God, who, as our great end, uniteth all our affections in this one scope, that we might please him, and enjoy him as our chief good and last end; that fixeth man's mind; which otherwise will be tossed up and down in perpetual uncertainties, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it cannot continue in any composed and settled frame. No one part of our lives will agree with another. A divided heart breedeth an uncertain life: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' the whole not firmly knit together by the power of the last end running through all; so that our lives are a mere lottery, the fancies and appetites we are governed by being jumbled together by chance. The heart by natural corruption is loosed from God, and distracted with variety of vain objects, which offer themselves to our senses. The interest of the world and flesh is taken into competition with God; and whilst the heart rangeth abroad, it is such a variable and double heart as will never be true to God; and while men are tossed from one dependence to another, and do not firmly adhere to God, being weaned from the vanities of the world, they are carried hither and thither by their perverse affections, sometimes to one thing, sometimes to another.

3. With respect to that one object who alone was sufficient for us. They that have left God, and would find happiness in the creatures, need many creatures before they can patch up any sorry tolerable happiness to themselves. One broken cistern can yield but little refreshing, Jer. ii. 13; so many disappointments make them look more about. God made man for himself, capable to enjoy him; now he is an infinite eternal good. We desire an infinite eternal good, still such as may quiet and satisfy us; therefore man being made capable of enjoying God, who is infinite, and finding himself not satisfied with a few or many things, always seeketh after new things. Here is his



error, that he seeketh after that which is infinite, among those things which are finite, and so wandereth up and down groping for an eternal good : Acts xvii. 26, 27, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth ; and determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations ; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.' As we depart from God, we are gone from unity, and are left distracted and confounded in the multitude of the creatures. *Quærent in varietate creaturarum, quod amiserunt in unitate creatoris*—They seek in the variety of the creatures what they have lost in the one God.

Use 1. Is to represent the misery of fallen man, that we may take up a lamentation for him, and bewail our departure from life and blessedness, and forsaking it for sin and misery. They have cast off God, and set at nought his counsel, and given themselves over to many fruitless and hurtful inventions. For alas ! man being left to the counsel of his own desperately wicked and deceitful heart, what doth he look after ? What may be expected from him but that all his thoughts and projects should be for the satisfaction of his lusts, to serve his pride, avarice, revenge, pomp, pleasure, and vanity ? God is not in all his thoughts ; he cares not whether he be pleased or displeased, honoured or dishonoured.

Here consider the disorder and danger of this state.

1. The disorder introduced hereby.

[1.] The creature is preferred before God ; for all their projects are how to live at ease in the world, not how to please and enjoy God ; and so they 'forsake their own mercies for observing lying vanities,' Jonah ii. 8. They seek an happiness apart from God, who is 'their own mercy ;' that is, they might have had from him all that which the mercy of an all-sufficient God can afford. And for what do they forsake him ? For 'lying vanities.' In regard of their emptiness they are vanities ; and in regard of their disappointing our expectations, 'lying vanities.' They do deceive us with a vain show, and in the issue miserable disappointments. And mark, these must be observed, followed after with a great solicitude and care, whereas the other is freely offered to us ; it is our own in the offer, and it is our own fault if it be not our own in the choice. So Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water.' God is the well-spring of all manner of good, a fountain that runneth constantly, and never faileth ; and such would he have been to us if we had continued loyal and dutiful to him. Besides the leaving of the ever-living, all-sufficient, and ever-flowing fountain of all good, they have betaken themselves to poor paltry vanities, that will yield them no real and solid refreshment.

[2.] The body is preferred before the soul ; for all our inventions run upon the body and the pleasing the flesh : Rom. xiii. 14, 'And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' But the precious and immortal soul is little thought of and cared for. They sit down well appaid with carnal contentments : Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry ; thou hast much goods laid up for many years.' They do not rise to any thoughts of an higher life, never think

of that immortal soul they carry about with them, but only use it to cater for the body, that the body may be well fed, and clothed, and adorned. Our business is to seek rest for our souls; if we would invent and consider, we should look after that: Jer. vi. 16, 'Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' We are never in our wits again till this be the project and design we travel with. But alas! this is not thought of. The neglected soul may easily complain of hard usage. What are our thoughts but what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and how shall we make a fair show in the flesh? If we look after the soul, it is to adorn it with secular learning and wisdom, which is but to serve the flesh in a more cleanly manner, and to gratify our worldly ends, our pride, or our interests. We look after flowers rather than fruit; those adornments of the soul which are for pomp rather than life, and for present use rather than eternal benefit.

[3.] They prefer earth before heaven and time before eternity. All their business is rather to make sure of the prosperity of the body than the salvation of the soul. And though it is plain, and they do or may know and see that this will not cure their diseases, nor ease their pain, nor save them from the grave nor hell, yet because riches will help them to live in pleasure and reputation with the world, and in plenty of all things, and to have their will as long as they live, that is enough for them, for they care not for the pleasures and happiness which are to be enjoyed in the other world. Though death and the grave may put an end to all they have here much sooner than they imagined, yet their minds and hearts are set upon these things as their happiness, and will not be diverted from them; they have their portion in this world: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.'

2. The danger. As it is a base thing to act so disproportionably to the light of reason, so within a little while it will be a bitter thing: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee.' Sure it will be bitterness in the end to forsake the Lord, and walk in the inventions and imaginations of thine own heart. You are posting to your eternal misery, where a reflection upon your evil choice will be the greatest part of your misery: Isa. i. 11, 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and the sparks which ye have kindled: this shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.' The allusion is not to such a fire as burneth and consumeth, but such as doth warm and cherish. Those stakes which wicked worldlings rely upon for succour will in time prove their greatest calamities, and those tufts and fuzes which they promised the greatest comfort to themselves from will occasion the greatest sorrow; the brands which they heaped together will afford them little heat and light, but smoke to vex and choke them. He that will warm himself by his own sparks can expect no other issue from his own rash folly and God's righteous vengeance.



*Use 2.* To exhort us not only to lament it, but to come out of this condition. And here to this end—

1. Renounce that crooked carnal wisdom which is man's undoing. Man at first seeking to be wise, became a fool. Now 'he must be a fool, that he may be wise,' 1 Cor. iii. 18; a fool to the flesh and the world, that he may be wise to God.

2. Give up yourselves to God in covenant, as your Lord and felicity. A man is never in his wits till he cometh to this: Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.' Our misery is in departing from him, so our happiness is in putting ourselves into his hands again. Now you must give up yourselves to him as your supreme Lord and chief felicity or happiness, depending upon him as your happiness, obeying him as your Lord; obey his counsel though against your own reason, and stick to his ways though they seem to be against your present happiness. Remember that duty is safety, that cleaving to God with loss is better than departing from him with seeming gain; and God, that outwits the subtle designer, doth take care of and preserve the plain and simple person, that avowedly adhereth to him, when all the contrivances of foolish and worldly-minded men prove vain and unprosperous. Your obedience will be your safety. Dependence and obedience do mutually cherish one another; the more we depend, the more we obey; and the more we obey, the more we depend; and so they discover one another. Let us show our dependence on God, that in all the changes of this life, by a firm, fast adherence and resolution, we stick fast to God, whatever comes of it, using no means but what he allows, and counting his favour our happiness. They that depend not on him are left to their own inventions.

3. Your great design must be to approve yourselves to God: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.'

*Use 3.* It sheweth what need we have to give up ourselves to the conduct of God's word and Spirit. Man is so full of his own inventions that none can be safe but they that depend upon God for direction: James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.' Such a fallible creature as man is in point of truth, such an impotent creature is he in point of power, such an indigent creature in point of happiness and self-sufficiencies, such a sinful corrupt creature, so full of imaginations and lusts, so many crooked dispositions in his heart, so many wiles to justify his irregular choice, so many temptations, and they represented with such sophistry, that he should be willing to accept of direction. Yea, the people of God themselves have need of the direction of the word, in regard of the weakness of their understandings and the perverseness of their affections.

1. Our understandings are so weak, that we are ignorant of many things necessary to be known; for we know but in part. If we know something in general, we fail in particular application; both in general and in particular. If we know things habitually, we do not actually consider them, being hindered by multitude of business, or the violence of temptations, or lulled asleep by the pleasures of the flesh: Eccles. v. 1, 'They consider not that they do evil.'

2. Our affections are perverse, and so addicted rather to be led by

sense than right reason, that there is great danger lest, seeing and approving that which is better, we follow what is worse, contrary to our knowledge and conscience : Rom. ii. 18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.' And therefore the best had need to pray with David : Ps. cxliiii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God : thy Spirit is good ; lead me into the land of uprightness.'

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## SERMON UPON ECCLESIASTES XII. 7.

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*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.—ECCLES. xii. 7.*

IN the beginning of this chapter Solomon presseth us to remember our creator while yet young: many have been too late acquainted with God, but never any too soon. His arguments are—

1. From the wearisome evils of old age, very rhetorically described in ver. 2-6, 'While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low: also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.' That is a time of expense, and needeth cordials rather than work and service. Therefore, while the prints of God's creating bounty are fresh upon us, it is best to exercise ourselves to godliness.

2. From the certain approach of death, as the final issue of the present life; therefore we should prepare for this change, think of God betimes, and secure a better life before this come to the last period. This argument is in the text, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth,' &c. Man consists of a body and a soul; the text telleth you what shall become of both.

1. Here is represented the state of the body after death.

2. The state of the soul.

1. The state of the body; it shall be resolved into the matter out of which it was made. Dust it was in its composition, and dust it shall be in its dissolution: 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was.'

2. The state of the soul in the other world: 'And the spirit shall return to God that gave it.' Where—

[1.] The nature of it, or what kind of substance the soul is; it is a spirit, or an immaterial substance.

[2.] The author of it, who is God ; he gave it ; he gave us the body too, but the soul in a more especial manner.

[3.] The disposal of it, or in what state it remaineth after death ; it returneth to God. It is not extinguished when the body is dissolved into dust, nor doth it vanish into the air, but returneth to God.

All true wisdom consisteth in the knowledge of God and ourselves ; we cannot know ourselves unless we know the parts of which we do consist. This text giveth you a right notion of them both ; for it telleth you what they are, and what shall become of them. They are conjoined, but distinct ; and therefore, when the union betwixt them is dissolved, they go several ways. We are concerned in them both, but more in the soul, which hath the pre-eminence above the body. The one is visible, and therefore its changes are known ; but the other is invisible, and therefore more unknown ; but the state of both is equally certain, for as certainly as the body returneth to the dust, so doth the soul return to God.

First, For the first branch, ' Then shall the body return to the earth as it was,' I shall not stay upon it.

1. It giveth you the right notion of the body ; it is but dust moulded up into a comely shape, which is an effect of God's wisdom and power, to make such a curious frame out of the dust of the ground. We read in the history of the plagues of Egypt, that the magicians were not able so much as to bring forth lice out of the dust of the ground, *Exod. viii. 18, 19* ; but God could raise such a beautiful structure as man's body is. But though it speaketh God's power, yet it showeth our frailty. Our body is here called ' dust ;' it is not brass, or iron, or stone, or stiff clay, but dust, and shall return to the earth as it was. Dust hath no coherence or consistence, but is easily scattered with every puff of wind ; so is our earthly or dusty tabernacle with every blast of God's displeasure : *Gen. xviii. 27*, ' Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes ;' *Isa. xl. 15*, ' Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and they are counted as the small dust of the balance.'

2. What shall become of it ? ' It shall return to the earth as it was ;' *Gen. iii. 19*, ' Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return ;' *Ps. civ. 29*, ' Thou takest away their breath ; they die and return to their dust ;' *Ps. cxlvi. 4*, ' He returneth to his earth.' Which should teach us to take care for a better estate : *2 Cor. v. 1*, ' For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The soul dwelleth now in an earthly house ; it should look out for a more glorious mansion.

Secondly, Of the soul three things are spoken, which are so many arguments to prove its immortality, which is the subject I mainly intend—

1. The kind of it ; it is a spirit. The matter of which the body is made is the earth, and so it is still maintained : ' He bringeth forth food for them out of the earth,' *Ps. civ. 14* ; and so breedeth and casteth out corruption every day ; but the soul is a simple substance, not compounded of corruptible principles, and therefore cannot be resolved into any. The body liveth by the soul and from the soul, but the soul de-



pendeth upon nothing but God. The argument is good ; it is incorporeal and immaterial, therefore immortal ; for mortality hath reference to some compounded substance, which hath in itself some principle and cause of motion, as well as a material and passive part, that may be moved by that principle, and signifieth no more but a capacity of the material and passive part to be deprived of the inward and active principle of its motion. In short, if the soul die, it must be from the violence of some external power, or some principles of corruption within ; not by violence without : Mat. x. 28, ' And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' And it hath no principles of corruption, whereby it should destroy itself, for it is a spirit.

2. The author ; ' God gave it.' Our bodies are also his workmanship, but the soul is immediately framed by God, both in the first creation and the continual propagation of mankind. At the first creation, we read the body was created out of the earth or the dust of the ground, but the soul out of nothing, but immediately breathed into Adam by God : Gen. ii. 7, ' And the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' And still the soul is immediately created by God : Zech. xii. 1, ' He stretcheth forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.' The creating of the soul is reckoned among the works of his omnipotency : Heb. xii. 9, ' Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits ?' The fathers of our flesh are distinguished from the Father of spirits. Our natural parents under God are the instruments of our natural and earthly being, as they procured the matter out of which our bodies were derived ; they are *τῆς σαρκὸς πατέρας*, ' the fathers of our flesh,' but God is *πάτηρ πνεύματος*, ' The Father of our spirits.' The spirit of man runneth not in the material channel of fleshly descent ; it is not educed out of the power of the matter, but immediately made by God.

3. The disposal of it. When it flitteth out of the body, ' it returneth to God ;' that is, to God as a judge, to be disposed of by him into its everlasting estate. God challengeth souls as his, or belonging to his government, as universal king and judge of the world : Ezek. xviii. 4, ' All souls are mine.' He will give to every one according to his works, adjudging and sentencing them either to heaven, the mansion of the blessed, or ' spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23, or to hell, the place where damned spirits are kept in prison : 1 Peter iii. 19, ' He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' The body is not said to return to God, but to return to the earth as it was ; but the soul is said to return to God ; therefore the whole man dieth not, and is not extinguished with the body. All these particulars import the immortality of the soul.

*Doct.* That the soul of man is immortal, and dieth not when the body dieth, but remaineth in that estate into which it is disposed by God.

First, There is a threefold immortality—

1. An essential immortality, which importeth an absolute necessity of existence ; so it is said, 1 Tim. vi. 16, ' God only hath immortality.'

2. There is a natural immortality, which hath a foundation in the being of the creatures; so the angels and spirits of men are in their nature immortal, so as they cannot be destroyed by any second cause, and have no principle of corruption in themselves, though by the power of God they might be annihilated.

3. A gratuitous immortality, or by gift and courtesy; so the body of Adam in innocency, *non conditione corporis*, but *benefitio conditoris*; not by the condition of his body, but the bounty of his maker: so the bodies of the faithful after the resurrection shall be immortal.

Secondly, Let us prove this, that the soul is immortal, and subsisteth after the separation. The point is necessary to be discussed; for till we are established in the belief of this truth, we shall fear no greater judgments than what do befall us in this world, nor expect greater mercies than what we enjoy here; and so never take care to reconcile ourselves to God, or to deny the profits of the world and the pleasures of sense, that we may attain a better estate. An holy life will never else be endeavoured or produced to any good increase; for such as men's belief is of an immortal or never-dying condition in heaven or hell, such will the bent of their hearts and course of life be; therefore the salvation of our souls is said to be the end of our faith: 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' There the 'end' signifieth either the scope or the event; if you take it for the scope, the great end of faith is to lead us from all worldly happiness to an estate after this life: Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' Sense saith, Spare the flesh; but faith saith, Save the soul. This is the scope and mark to which it tendeth. If you take it for the event and issue of things, all our believing, praying, enduring suffering, rejoicing, pleasing, and glorifying of God, endeth in this, the saving of our souls. Therefore let us see how it may be proved, both by scripture and by the light of reason.

1. By scripture, which is the proper means to beget faith. Dives desired one to go from the dead to tell his brethren of an everlasting estate of torment and bliss: Luke xvi. 27, 28, 'I pray thee, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment;' intimating thereby that the cause of his own sin and theirs was unbelief, or a not being persuaded of a world to come. Alas! we have but an obscure prospect of an estate after this life, and therefore indulge sensual delights. But what cure and remedy? Dives thought a spectre or apparition would be the best cure of this atheism; but Abraham or Christ thought otherwise: he referreth them to Moses and the prophets; that is, the holy scriptures, for all the books then written and received in the church are comprised in that expression. Since we are sick of the same disease, this will be our best remedy. We are told, 2 Tim. i. 10, that Christ 'hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' It is the privilege of the divine revelation to represent this truth with more clearness and certainty.

1. With more clearness. There is a mist upon eternity, which is only dispelled by the light of the gospel. Reasons from nature may in some measure acquaint us with an everlasting estate, yet what kind



of happiness it is that attendeth the godly, and what misery shall befall the wicked, it telleth us but little; but the scripture sets down enough to invite our hopes and awaken our fears. Heathens had some conceits of Elysian fields and places of blessedness, and some obscure caverns appointed to be places of torment, fitted to work men into a blind superstition; but the word of God hath given us such clear discoveries of future happiness and misery as that we may know what to hope for and what to fear; and if well improved, will breed in us a true spirit of godliness.

2. In regard of certainty. Nature may give us some dark guesses and uncertain conjectures, so as the heathens, that had no other light, were ready to say and unsay in a breath what they had spoken concerning our estate to come; but the gospel is a sure word, apt to beget faith, not a wavering opinion. Go to sense, which judgeth by the outside of things: Eccles. iii. 21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?' By sense we see mankind, as the beasts, to be conceived, formed in the belly, brought forth, nourished, to grow in strength and stature, wax old, and die; by the eye we can discern no external sensible difference; so that if we consult with mere sense, all religion and hope is gone. Go to reason, and that will tell us indeed that there is a difference between a man and a beast; that man knoweth and desireth things which the beasts do not and cannot; and that the reasonable soul hath operations independent of matter and of the body, and therefore it is probable it can subsist without the body; for the manner of working sheweth the manner of being. But there is cold comfort in a bare may-be. The gospel sheweth it shall be. As a glass, it doth discover this state to us; as a rule, it guideth us to the enjoyment of it; as a motive, it persuadeth us to seek after it; as a charter and grant, it doth assure our title to it: it is full fraught and thick sown with this kind of seed.

Therefore let us see what the light of scripture saith to this point.

[1.] It discovereth to us everywhere the doctrine of the eternal recompenses, two places, and two estates, wherein souls abide after death, heaven and hell: heaven, the mansion of the just: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' And hell, the place of torments: Mark ix. 44, 'They are cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' And as soon as the soul passeth out of the body, it is in one of these: Luke xvi. 22, 23, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man died also, and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.' He had a pompous funeral here upon earth; for it is said, 'he died, and was buried,' which is not said of Lazarus. These are truths not spoken of once or twice, but everywhere.

[2.] The covenant sheweth it, which is God's solemn transaction with his subjects, and consists of precepts or laws, invested with the sanction of promises and threatenings. Christ argues thus: Luke xx. 37, 38, 'Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' He proves the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

(1.) His commands ; all of them imply such an estate, and some of them express it. All imply it ; as faith in Christ. We believe in his name to obtain eternal life : John xx. 31, ' But these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing you might have life through his name ; ' and John v. 24, ' He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.' Repentance : Acts iii. 19, ' Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Therefore it is called ' repentance unto salvation,' 2 Cor. vii. 10 ; and ' repentance to life ; ' Acts xi. 18, ' Then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life.' So new obedience : Heb. v. 9, ' He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him ; ' Acts xxvi. 7, ' Unto which promise the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' And some express it : He hath commanded us ' not to labour for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,' John vi. 27 ; ' Not to lay up treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,' Mat. vi. 19, 20 ; and ' Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Luke xiii. 24. Now, if there were no such thing, all these commands would be in vain. Would God flatter us into a fool's paradise, and command us to look after a thing of nought ?

(2.) The sanction. And there—(1.) The threatening, which is damnation, or the second death : Mark xvi. 16, ' He that believeth not shall be damned.' Is this a vain scarecrow ? and need God govern his subjects by a cheat or a lie ? (2.) The promises ; he promiseth eternal life to them that obey the gospel and seek after this immortality : Rom. ii. 7, ' To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life ; ' Rev. ii. 10, ' Be thou faithful to death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Be faithful in making good your baptismal vow, improving talents, withstanding temptations. So to comfort us against fears, losses, and sorrows : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' Now, would God overreach us, and lead us with chimeras and vain hopes ?

[3.] The mediator of the new covenant sheweth it ; his coming from heaven, the place of souls, the region of spirits, and his going thither again at his ascension.

(1.) His coming from heaven. Wherefore was Christ incarnate, and clothed with our flesh, but that we might be apparelled with his glory ? John x. 10, ' I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' To lay a foundation for our eternal happiness.

(2.) His going to heaven, his entering into that glory he spake of, and so giving a visible demonstration to the world of the reality of it : 1 Peter i. 21, ' Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God.' There he remaineth at God's right hand, to open heaven to all believers. Christ, when he died, recommended his spirit to the Father : Luke xxiii. 46, ' Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' And so



do believers to Christ: Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' If the soul did perish with the body, why should we commit it to Christ?

[4.] The Holy Spirit is given to form and prepare us for this estate, therefore by consequence to assure us of it: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.'

(1.) Look to the graces of the Spirit. We are made partakers of the divine nature to draw us off from the world to heaven: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' Now will God fit the soul for such a blessed estate when this life is ended; and shall we never enjoy it? If we consider the soul not only as being an inward principle of life and sense, but also of reason, it proveth the immortality of it, much more as sanctified and ennobled by grace: Rom. viii. 10, 'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' Believers have a life wrought in them by the Spirit, which is the pledge and beginning of eternal life; for they are sanctified and purified, and fit to be brought into the sight and presence of God. The apostle doth not draw his argument there from the immortality of the soul, for that is common to good and bad; the wicked have a soul that will survive the body, but little to their comfort; their immortality is not an happy immortality; but he taketh his argument from the new life wrought in us by the Spirit, which is the beginning and earnest of a blessed immortality: the new life is an eternal principle of happiness.

(2.) Look to the comforts of the Spirit, from the love of God and the hopes of glory: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' Rom. v. 2, 'And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Now is it a fancy that holy men rejoice in? Look, as the terrors of a wounded conscience are the foretastes of hell-torments, called somewhere the pains of hell, so the comforts of the Spirit are the first-fruits of heavenly joys, to set us a-longing for more: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' Now by all these things let us rouse up a drowsy faith, and triumph over that carnal atheism and unbelief that worketh in our hearts. Is the whole scripture false, and the christian religion a well-devised fable, our Redeemer an impostor, and the covenant of God a dream, and the comforts of the Spirit fanatical illusions? And were they all deceived that embraced the christian religion, that took such pains in subduing the flesh, so freely hazarded their interests, and life itself, on the promises of Christ and the hopes of another world? Are the wisest men the world ever saw fools, and the ordinances of Christ a customary superstition, and these rejoicings and foretastes of the children of God a mere deceit and imposture? Surely it cannot be. Therefore this is true, that the soul dieth not with the body, but is in that estate into which God disposeth it.

## II. By the light of reason.

First, I shall urge such arguments as the scripture directeth us to.

1. From the nature of the soul. It is a spirit, and such a principle of life as hath light in it : John i. 4, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' The soul of man differeth from the soul of a beast, for that hath only life and sense in it ; but this hath light, and therefore was designed to more noble and glorious ends than merely to quicken and enliven the body. The soul of the beast is mortal, because it is created only to serve the body, and knoweth nothing, desireth nothing, delighteth in nothing but what belongeth to the pleasure and welfare of the body ; but now the soul of man apprehendeth things past, present, and to come, is capable of tongues, arts, and sciences, and things abstract from bodily sense ; it can discourse about God, angels, and all kind of spiritual beings, about eternity and immortality, and propound and debate questions and doubts concerning the world to come. The beasts look only to their food and the propagation of their kind ; they know nothing, and can conceive nothing, of man's affairs ; but now man's soul is not only capable of being ennobled and improved by moral virtues, and such things as fit us for human society, but is capable also of conformity to God, by being made holy and upright, and of communion with him in holy duties and acts of grace : 1 John i. 3, 'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The beasts desire not the company of men, as we do of God and of the blessed spirits. In short, there is a greater affinity between the souls of men and angels than between the souls of beasts and men : Ps. viii. 5, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.' Well, then, can it be imagined the souls of men, furnished with such capacities of understanding, are nothing but a little puff of air, that is dissipated in dying, or a little vital heat, that is extinguished with the corporeal matter, or only the vigour of the blood ? That soul that can so much soar aloft above the interests and concerns of the body, and take such a marvellous delight and contentment in spiritual things as the view of all manner of truths, must that follow the state of the body ? Shall that creature that cometh so near the angels die like the beasts ? or rather, become like the angels of God that always behold his face ? Yea, that creature that draweth so near to God in the majesty of his person and the abilities of his mind, that was created after God's own image, and for the worship and service and enjoyment of God, shall he die as the beasts that perish ? It cannot be imagined.

2. The scripture mentions words that imply its independence of the body, or that it doth not so wholly depend on the body that it cannot subsist and act without it ; they go several ways, as in the text : 3 John 2, 'I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, as thy soul prospereth ;' 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' And experience teacheth the truth of these things, that the body and soul seem sometimes to have no communion with one another, so different are their functions and offices. You shall often see men decrepit in all the members of the body, who yet have the motions of their minds as strong and as nimble as when in perfect health ; and when they are upon the borders of death, without



vigour and pulse, their understandings are more sublime than before, and their thoughts more refined. It is true the indispositions of the body clog the soul in things that are to be acted by the body; but in what the soul acteth apart, in the midst of aches and pains their strength of mind is entire, and their comforts never more raised than in bodily weakness. Therefore it lives and acts apart from the body.

3. The scripture directs us to this argument, that this is the general persuasion of all mankind, that there is a life after death; and it instanceth in that that is most sensible, and of every day's experience, our desires and fears.

[1.] Desires. The soul hath a natural desire of immortality, which, if it should not enjoy, that desire were in vain; but God doth nothing in vain. The apostle intimateth this, how men feel about for something eternal and infinite: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him.' Every man would be happy, and eternally happy; for otherwise he would be tormented with a fear of losing that which he counteth his happiness. See Ps. iv. 6, 'Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it;' John vi. 34, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread;' Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous.' Other creatures besides man are satisfied with what they have here; but the soul of man is satisfied with nothing but the eternal enjoyment of what is good, an immortal estate, an infinite good. Every one that loveth himself would be happy, and, if he could, everlastingly happy. The saints, and those that are taught of God, pitch upon the right way: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' But this is the universal inclination of all mankind. Whence cometh this desire to be so universal, if there be nothing to satisfy it? Every natural appetite was given us for some purpose, and have things designed for their satisfaction; and therefore there is that immortality we all seek after, not in our bodies, they must return to their earth; not in fancy, that is a shadow; this is like the pleasure which those take that want children in playing with little dogs: it lieth in the soul, in the eternal enjoyment of God.

[2.] Fears, which presage and foretell such an estate to our great disquiet. Conscience fears a judgment after this life: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' And a state of misery to come: Heb. ii. 15, 'Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' At death these fears are more active and pungent: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin;' and surprise the guilty soul with greater horror and distraction; then they are summoned to their great account. If the soul were mortal, why should men be afraid of torments after death? They anticipate the miseries of the life to come, not as it puts a period unto their natural comforts, but as it is an entrance into everlasting miseries.

4. The scripture directs to this argument, the justice of God for the comfort of the faithful: 2 Thes. i. 5, 'Which is a manifest token

of the righteous judgment of God.' The sufferings of the faithful are a demonstration of a future estate. There is a God: if there be not a first and fountain-being, how did we come to be? for nothing can make itself; or how did the world fall into this order? This God is just, for all perfections are in the first being. If we deny him to be just, we deny him to be God and the governor of the world: Rom. iii. 5, 6, 'Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?' Now it is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil, or that he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between the wicked and obedient. It seemeth uncomely when it is otherwise: Prov. xxvi. 1, 'As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest; so honour is not seemly for a fool.' When the wicked are exalted, men look on it as an uncouth thing. Now this reward and punishment is not fully dispensed in this world, even in the judgment of them that have no great knowledge of the heinous nature of sin, and the judgment competent thereunto. Yea, rather, the best are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of troubles, their persons molested, their names cast out as odious, when the wicked live in pomp and ease, and oppress them at their pleasure. Therefore, since God's justice doth not make such a difference here, there is another life wherein he will do it; otherwise we must deny all providence, and that God doth not concern himself in human affairs, and that a man may break his laws, oppress his people, and no great harm will come of it: Zeph. i. 12, 'The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;' and God would seem indifferent to good and evil; yea, rather partial to the evil, and to favour the wicked more than the righteous, which is blasphemy, and a diminution of God's goodness and holiness: Ps. xi. 6, 7, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. But the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance doth behold the upright.' Obedience would be man's loss and ruin, and so God would be the worst master: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' They that forsake the sinful pleasures of this life, hazard all their natural interests, row against the stream of flesh and blood, would be ill provided for by their religion. Therefore there is another life wherein God will reward his people.

Secondly, I shall urge other arguments for the immortality of the soul.

1. The capacity of the soul argueth the immortality of it. Now it is capable—(1.) Of civil arts; (2.) Of owning the distinction between good and evil; (3.) Of knowing immortality and matters of everlasting consequence; (4.) Of knowing God and his attributes; (5.) Of the divine nature, which consists in the knowledge and love of God; (6.) Of a sweet familiar communion with him. Let us see how all these capacities will prove the matter in hand.

[1.] The being capable of civil arts will prove the soul's spiritual substance, far excelling the beasts in dignity; for it is capable of all kind of learning and witty inventions; as grammar, and the knowledge of tongues and rhetoric, to form and polish our speech; logic, to refine



our reason; ethics, to order our manners; medicine, to cure the distempers of our bodies; by physics, or by natural philosophy, it knoweth all kind of things, all ranks of beings, from God and angels to the smallest worm; yea, it acquireth such skill as to make use of all creatures for its own benefit: James iii. 7, 'For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.' The power and skill of man is large, and reacheth through the whole creation; by one means or other man mastereth them. Now what doth this signify but that man hath a soul different from the souls of the beasts? Job xxxv. 11, 'He teacheth us more than the beasts of the field, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.' And that will contribute much to the matter in hand. Solomon puts the question, Ecces. iii. 21, 'Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?' Mark, there he asserts that the spirit of the man goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast goeth downward; there is an ascent ascribed to the one, and a descent to the other; upward implieth heaven and heavenly things; downward, the earth and earthly things. The human soul ascendeth to God, the universal judge of all the world, whose throne is in heaven; but the soul of the beasts taketh its lot among all earthly things, which are at length resolved into earth, water, and air. In the creation, God is said to breathe into man the spirit of life; not so of the beast. So in the dissolution; the one returneth to God, the other leaveth off to exist, and when they die, they are no more.

[2.] It is capable of owning the distinction between moral good and evil. He that doth not acknowledge it is unworthy the name of man; for to love or hate God is not indifferent; nor to kill a neighbour, or hunt an hare in the woods; to use lawful matrimony, or for a man to pollute himself either with promiscuous or incestuous embraces. Now, if our souls differed not from the soul of a beast, they could have no such apprehension or conception. The beasts know pain and pleasure, but they have no knowledge of virtue and vice, as is sensible to every one that considereth them; but man hath: Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' Well, then, man hath a life beyond this, a further end of his actions than a beast, which is to approve himself to God, to whom he must give an account, whether he hath done good or evil; for a conscience supposeth a law, and a law supposeth a sanction both of reward and punishment, and a sanction a judge, to whom a man is accountable. And if man were but an higher and wiser sort of beast, he would but differ gradually from a dog or a swine. Now no man would be used as a beast, and made a slave to any one that can master and tame him, and sold in the market as a beast; if this be his lot by his infelicity in the world, he would look upon it as an uncouth thing, and that it would be to sin before God to use him so. Therefore there is a distinction between men and beasts; men die not as the beasts die.

[3.] They are capable of the knowledge of immortality, and can frame curious disputes and accurate debates thereof, which sheweth they are

not altogether incapable of the thing itself ; for the beasts know no other life beyond what they enjoy, and mind no other, and care for no other ; and therefore the estate of man will be different from theirs.

[4.] Man is capable of knowing God and his attributes, which the beasts are not, because they were never made to enjoy him : ‘He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true,’ 1 John v. 20. They are capable of knowing their relation to God as his creatures and subjects, and so are obnoxious to his judgment, and that nothing here can make them happy, and that God alone can do it : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ‘There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.’ That happiness lieth not in what men ordinarily seek it in, riches, honours, and pleasures, but in the favour of God ; that here we do not enjoy him to the full, and that therefore we must seek after another life ; here we seek God, in the world to come we find him, and therefore cannot rest in this partial enjoyment. Man is ever seeking after an immortal blessedness. Now this capacity is not in vain ; the soul is restless till it find him.

[5.] Man is capable of a divine nature, which consists not only in the bare knowledge, but love of God : 2 Peter i. 4, ‘Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.’ He is capable of the image of God : Eph. iv. 24, ‘And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.’

[6.] Man is capable of a sweet familiar communion with God and friendship with him : 1 John i. 3, ‘And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’ Therefore the state of man dying must needs be different from that of a beast, who hath no knowledge, no desire, no love to God, no capacity of communion with him, unless it be in respect of receiving the effects and bounty of his common providence.

2. The dignity of man : ‘God made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour,’ Ps. viii. 5. Now if he were not immortal, he would be of all creatures most miserable ; his reason only would serve to make him capable and apprehensive of the greater calamity and trouble. Sure it is that man is the masterpiece of this visible world, in respect of the majesty of his person, the abilities of his mind, and his sovereignty over all the works of God’s hands, all which are marks of special favour of the creator to man above other creatures. Now, if God hath given to man the next place in order of dignity to the angels above his other creatures, what would his love signify if he be in a worse condition than the beasts, and liable to so many cares, encumbrances, grief, and remorse of conscience, which the beasts are freed from ? Alas ! considering the calamities of his life, infirmities of his body, perplexities of his mind, his reason is a sad privilege to him, and his torment rather than his blessedness, whilst it only giveth him a doleful remembrance of what is past, a care about what is present, and awakens fears of what is to come. The beasts indeed have a sense of what is present, but no remorse for what is past, no presage of what is to come ; but man hath all these, a bitter remem-



brance of sins past; and for present evils, they are more than those of the beasts, such as poverty, banishment, imprisonment, slavery, loss of estate, sundry sicknesses and diseases, and man hath a more bitter sense and apprehension of them. And for time to come, he hath a foresight of the end, which the beasts have not: so that we have twenty-fold more cares and labours than they have, who live in tranquillity and liberty, and free from those disquiets which vex mankind, and have no remorse to sour their pleasures, either from the afflictive remembrance of what is past, or solicitude about what is to come. Therefore if our happiness were here only, man would be less happy than the beasts, many of whose lives are longer and sweeter, who have a more sincere use of bodily pleasures. But here is their happiness; God had provided some better thing for them to be enjoyed in the other world. It cannot be imagined that he hath made his noblest creature in the world with a nature that should be a necessary misery and vexation to itself, above the calamities incident to the rest of the creatures. The very apprehensions and desires that a man hath of an higher good would be a torment and burden to him if there were no calamity else, for he seeth a better estate which he cannot enjoy; as an horse tied up from the provender which is near unto him and cannot reach it. Our nature inclineth us to know and love that we cannot obtain: we can think aforehand of our death and abode in darkness, which beasts cannot, for they are not troubled with these thoughts: yea, we fear miseries after death, and know not how to be exempted from them. Now it is incredible that God should make his noblest creature most miserable, by setting before his eyes a certain death, and possible torments and miseries after death, and provide no remedy against these things.

3. God governeth men by the hopes and fears of another life, and therefore such a life there is, and so the souls of men are immortal. The reason is, because God needeth not to govern the world by deceit and lying: this would be against his holiness and benignity, and would destroy the very government he would establish; for it would tempt us to insincerity, and to cheating and deceiving others; for men are no better than their religion, it were well if they were as good. The foolish, bad, and ignorant may use such arts; but the wise, holy, and good would not. In ludicrous things we fright our children with bugbears and names; but in such a serious thing as the government of the world, it cannot be imagined that God should use such an artifice.

[1.] That God governeth the world by the hopes and fears of another life is evident, not only by the tenor of the christian religion, where the covenant between God and men is established by such threatenings and promises, but by the consent of all nations where government is secured and upheld by such a persuasion. Now if the soul be not immortal, and there be not firm reasons to induce us to believe that it is so, why hath such a conceit been rooted in the minds of men of all nations and all religions, not only Greeks and Romans, but barbarians, and people least civilised? They all received this opinion from hand to hand, from their ancestors; and the nearer men trace it to the original of mankind, the more clear and pressing hath been the conceit thereof. Lapse of time, which ordinarily decayeth all things, hath not been able

to deface it out of the minds of men ; the sense of an immortal condition after this life hath ever been accounted the great bridle upon the world ; and being spread throughout the universe, hath with all forwardness been received among all nations, and hath borne up against all encounters of sin, and hath maintained itself in the midst of those revolutions of human affairs wherein other truths are lost.

[2.] There is a necessity of this government, as suiting best with the nature of man, which is much moved by the hopes and fears of good and evil after death. That man is governed by hopes and fears, common sense teacheth us ; that the hopes and fears of the present life are not sufficient to bridle carnal nature, and withstand temptations, and keep us in the true obedience and love to God to the end, experience also showeth, because for the satisfaction of our lusts we can dispense with temporal evils, as the lecher in the Proverbs, chap. v. 11, 'And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.' Besides, if it were so that these motives of temporal good and evil were sufficient, man were more to be feared than God, which killeth and stabbeth all religion at the heart ; for man useth this engine of temporal punishments and inconvenience ; they do execution on those that break their laws. Now Christ teacheth us : Luke xii. 4, 5, 'I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear : Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.'

[3.] The necessity to it appeareth to meet with secret sins, such as fornication, privy atheism, malice, adultery, murder, perjury, hypocrisy, treachery, theft, deceit. He that believeth not a life after this may secretly carry on these sins without impunity. Man cannot see the heart, or make laws to govern it, therefore no man can know or punish these secret sins ; therefore, if men can but hide their sins, they are safe. So for the sins of men powerful in the world ; for who can call them to an account here for their filthiness or cruelty ? Job xxxiv. 18, 'Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked ? and to princes, Ye are ungodly ?' There is no restraint to those who have none above them ; and all secret wickedness would be committed without fear. So that to deny the immortality of the soul, or a life after this, would take away all honesty, and open the flood-gates to all villany and evil practices. Who would make conscience of entire obedience to God, enter in by the strait gate, walk in the narrow way, row against the stream of flesh and blood, work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and consecrate their time to God, if there were no other life after this nor happiness to be there expected ? Alas ! we plainly see the contrary. Who are so lewd and hardened in their sensualities as they that are tainted with this conceit ? That not only the denial, but the forgetfulness of this estate worketh this effect. They make the best of the present life : 1 Cor. xv. 32, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Such atheistical thoughts are very common : ver. 33, 'Be not deceived ; evil communications corrupt good manners.' But a deep sense of this immortal estate is the fountain of all sobriety, righteousness, and godliness ; and all that is virtuous and praiseworthy hath been done in the world upon this account. There-



fore, who are the better men, those that believe the immortality of the soul, or those that believe it not? And who are likely to be in the right, wicked wretches, or holy, serious, and considering men?

[4.] The duties which God requireth of us show it. Man is obliged to divers duties which are difficult and displeasing to the flesh, and which we should never perform without a serious belief of the soul's immortality; such as these, to forsake the sinful pleasures of the world, to mortify and tame the flesh, diligently to exercise ourselves to godliness, to suffer the loss of all outward comforts, yea, of life itself. All these are commanded; the mortification and keeping down the body, Col. iii. 5; diligence in the heavenly life, Phil. iii. 13, 14; fortitude and patience under the greatest trials, as Moses is propounded for an example, Heb. xi. 24-26; not to faint in the greatest tribulations, 2 Cor. iv. 16-18; yea, to expose life itself, Luke xiv. 26. Now would God, who is so loving to mankind, bind us to displease the flesh, and enjoin us so many duties which are harsh and troublesome, yea, some of them hurtful and detrimental to the body, if he had not provided some better thing for us? Would he, all whose precepts are for our good, and who hath made self-love so great an help to our duty, be so hard to us, but that he knoweth how to recompense this diligence and self-denial? He saith, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on,' Mat. vi. 25; but he saith, 'Keep the soul with all diligence,' Deut. iv. 9. Would he be so earnest in pressing us to look after the soul, and strengthening and adorning the inward man, if the soul were to perish with the body? Surely, if all depended upon the body, the body should be more cared for; but it is quite otherwise. Scripture and reason show the body is only to be cared for in subordination to the soul, and that our chiefest work should be to furnish our souls with knowledge and grace. And they are the worthiest men who do most busy themselves about divine and heavenly things; whereas they are the basest who care so much for the body, and make a business of those things which they should do only by the by. Certainly if there were an end of us when the body faileth, we should abhor nothing so much as death, desire nothing so much as the good of the body; nothing would be so dear to us, but we would part with it to keep off the death of the body, for then there would be an end of us. Death would be the chiefest evil we could suffer, and that which would deprive us of all other good; nothing should be feared and abhorred like death, and we should lie, forswear, or do anything to avoid it. But this principle would not only destroy all generous actions, but introduce all dishonesty and sin into the world; for as we should never venture our lives upon any reason and inducement, though never so just, so we should stick at no evil to preserve life, and the conveniencies which belong thereunto.

[5.] The desires wrought in us by the Spirit of God, to see and enjoy God, argue the immortality of the soul: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;' 2 Cor. v. 2, 'For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which

is from heaven.' We prove another life, not only by the inclination, instinct, and disposition of nature towards happiness in general; the universal desire of all mankind is to be everlastingly happy, this proveth it; for this desire being universal and natural, is not frustrate; nature doth nothing in vain: but the desires and groans of the sanctified do much more prove it, for they do more forcibly direct and carry our hearts to a certain scope and end; and they are excited by the Holy Spirit, for he imprinteth a firm persuasion of this happiness, and stirreth up these desires after it; and that in our sober and severest moods, when we are solemnly conversing with God in his holy worship, in the word, prayer, meditation, and the Lord's supper, and all other holy duties, then he most raiseth these affections towards heavenly things; and also he leaveth this heavenly relish upon our hearts at other times, as the reward of our eminent obedience to God; and the more serious and holy any are, the more do they feel of this. Now these desires being of God's own infusing, they will not be disappointed; therefore those who make the hopes of the world to come their happiness, desire, and joy, will one day be partakers of the blessedness of it; their groaning, seeking, and longing, will not be in vain, for God will give the satisfaction where he giveth the desire.

Use 1. Is terror to the wicked and ungodly. Your souls die not with the body, but must enter into endless torments. The body perisheth, but the immortal substance will for ever subsist in a state of woe or weal. Now how brutishly and much beneath a man do they live who wholly give up themselves to carnal pleasures and worldly pursuits, that live as if their souls did die with their bodies, and they should never hear of them more! They make no provision for their everlasting estate. Three evils I charge upon these men—

1. These men do not believe that which scripture and reason showeth to be certainly true, and so do not show themselves either christians or men. The great design of scripture is to give them a prospect of another world, and to assure them of a life after death. And will you not receive God's testimony? Are God's threatenings a vain scarecrow; are the promises a golden dream? Go and reason, if the soul abideth not after it flitteth out of the body, it is either because it cannot be or act, or because God will not suffer it to be or act, or hath not clearly declared it shall be so, so that no certainty can be had thereof or hath declared or expressed himself to the contrary. Now none of these things are true.

[1.] Not the first. The nature of the soul is such that it showeth plainly that it can live without the body. A spirit can subsist by itself; that which God hath fitted to endure for ever, he hath designed it to endure for ever. Now the soul as a spirit is fitted to live for ever, and it can live without the body, for it is *ἀντοκίνητος*, it doth of itself move itself. Is it the body that supports the soul, or the soul that supports the body? Heathens have thought so upon this argument, and will not you? *Cum venerit ille dies, qui mixtum hoc divini humanique, secernat, corpus hic ubi inveni relinquam, ipse me diis redeam*—When that day shall come, when the divine spirit shall be severed from the human body, I shall leave the body where I found it, and yield up my spirit to the gods.



[2.] Is it because God will not permit it to be, or act without the body? Whence doth that appear? To us christians he hath appointed a mediator to receive our souls.

[3.] Or is it because he hath doubtfully expressed his mind? You are not sure there is no such life; it is impossible you should know or prove the contrary. The question between the infidel and the christian is not whether there be a world to come? but whether he can prove there is none? You cannot prove the falsity of the christian hope by any sound argument that there is no heaven nor hell; for aught you can say or know there are both, and it were best to take the surer side. In a lottery, men will venture some small matter. Some of the heathens that disputed against it or doubted of it, yet acknowledged it to be a supposition conducing to virtue and goodness.

[4.] God hath not declared his mind to the contrary, but plainly told us that it is so. It is easy to presume that a thousand to one but it is so. Natural reason, consent of nations, fears of a guilty conscience, or presages of eternal punishment, the whole drift of the christian religion, the example of Christ, all prove it. Those wretches that outface religion accuse Christ of a lie, and the wisest men of the world of folly, their own consciences of imposing a cheat upon them to check their vain pleasures, and, in defiance of light within and without, smother all conceits of a world to come.

2. They do not consider these things, and weigh them, that they may come to understand what is their end and business here. Alas! are we so near everlasting joy or misery, and yet neglect it; yea, it may be, scorn and oppose those that make it their chiefest care and labour to prepare for it? How long have you lived in the world, and scarce ever asked the question or thought seriously, What shall I do to be saved? You are desirous to give full and ample satisfaction to your dying part, yea, have pampered it, and over-clogged it; but your business is not to pamper the body, but to save your souls. Now you should show yourselves men: Isa. xli. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors!' Think aforehand, What would poor deluded souls, that are in their everlasting estate, give if they might be trusted with a little time again, if God would but try them once more, that they might mend their past folly? They have lost their souls for poor temporal trifles. But alas! now, though we are daily drawing near to our long home, yet we little think of it; we are almost come to our journey's end, and we never consider whither we are going.

3. They do not improve these things, nor live answerably, which is a further degree of brutishness: Ps. xlix. 12, 'Man being in honour, abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish;' Jude 10, 'What they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.' They are strangers to the heavenly mind, and wholly governed by carnal sense; they live as if the soul did serve for no other use but to keep the body from stinking. Their principles have no influence upon their practice; they talk of the immortality of the soul, yet spend all their care upon the body.

*Use 2. Is caution.*

1. Do not hazard your souls for things that perish. Let nothing

entice us to forfeit or hinder our endless happiness: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;' Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

2. Do not betray the souls of others for a little pelf, as ignorant and careless ministers do, so they have the maintenance. Love to souls is the great thing we learn of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself 'a ransom for them,' Mat. xx. 28. Ministers should have the bowels of Christ: Phil. i. 8, 'For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Christ; pity those that are going to hell, and ready to perish everlastingly.'

*Use 3.* Is exhortation, to persuade you to make it your mark and scope to look after this immortal state of blessedness. Let us leave things that perish to men that perish: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.' Surely this argument should persuade us to heavenly-mindedness. Earthly things are of short duration; and shall quickly leave us, and when they are gone, they are to us as if they had never been, a shadow, a dream, or something that is next to nothing; but the fruit of godliness abideth for ever: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

#### *Motives.*

1. You know more of the dignity of man, who is created after the most perfect pattern, the image of God himself: Gen. i. 26, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.' Redeemed at the dearest rate, the blood of the Son of God: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ,' and designed and ordained to the highest end, the glorifying and enjoying of God: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' Surely they should be more sensible of their immortality, and serve God more than the rest of his creatures.

2. You profess that religion which hath brought life and immortality to light, and the end of which is the saving of the soul. Now, though you have the profession of christians, you have not the spirit of christians if this be not your daily business and scope. What have you done for the saving of your souls? if all your business, cares, and fears are about the body and the interests of the bodily life, you have the spirit of the world, not of God. Are not your souls worth the looking after? that which is the scope of your religion should be the business of your lives and actions, that a christian may correspond and answer to his christianity, as the impress doth to the seal.

3. You are God's witnesses: Isa. xliii. 10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' What proof do we give of a reasonable immortal soul? Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' Do we propagate carelessness and atheism, or a mindfulness of the world to come?



4. If we are satisfied with present things, we have no more to look for : Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life;' Mat. vi. 2, 'They have their reward;' Luke vi. 24, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation;' Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' It is sad to be put off with these things, with riches, honours, favour of men, and a little temporal greatness.

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## SERMONS UPON REVELATION I. 5, 6.

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### SERMON I.

*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*—REV. i. 5, 6.

THE sacrament is an abridgment of the gospel, and we shall best suit the end of it when we lay before you the sum of the gospel in one entire view. This scripture presenteth us with the principal parts of it. It carrieth the form of a doxology or a thanksgiving; wherein observe—

1. The person to whom this doxology is directed, ‘To him;’ that is, to Jesus Christ, ‘the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.’

2. The reasons or matter of it. Wherein—(1.) The moving cause of all that Christ hath done for us, ‘He loved us.’ (2.) The benefit obtained for us, ‘He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.’ (3.) The fruit of it, ‘And made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.’

3. The doxology itself, ‘To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’

*Doct.* That the Lord Jesus deserveth everlastingly to be honoured, lauded, and praised by all the saints that make mention of his name.

John having occasionally mentioned Christ, falleth into this doxology.

*Reasons.* (1.) From what he is; (2.) For what he hath done for us; (3.) For the fruits and benefits we have thereby.

I. From what he is. He is described—(1.) To be ‘the faithful witness,’ who hath made known the will of the Father with all fidelity and certainty. (2.) As one who, being crucified, rose from the dead as our first-fruits, ascertaining our resurrection: ‘The first begotten from the dead.’ The apostle saith, Col. i. 18, ‘The first-born from the dead.’ The resurrection is a kind of birth, and Christ is the first-born or first-begotten, because he was the first that rose from the dead in his own



strength, and vanquished death. Others were raised before him, but to die again; they were raised in their own single persons, he as a public person: 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept,' 1 Cor. xv. 20. And he will by the same power raise again all his members to immortality and life. (3.) He is 'the Prince of the kings of the earth;' one that hath all power given him in heaven and in earth, and is superior to all princes of the world, not only in regard of eminency, as a far greater prince than they, but authority and power over them; he is their Lord and sovereign as well as ours: as it is said, Dan. iv. 17, 'The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will.'

1. Observe, these titles are given to Christ with respect to his three offices of king, priest, and prophet. (1.) His prophetic office is implied in that term, 'The faithful Witness;' one that hath brought the gospel out of the bosom of God, and plainly and clearly revealed it to the world, and hath confirmed the certainty of it by divers miracles, especially by his death, from which he rose again, and ascended, and poured out the Spirit upon the disciples for a testimony; and still continueth that dispensation in part of giving the Spirit, so far as to assure the hearts of his people that this is the truth. (2.) His priesthood is implied in that expression, 'The first-begotten from the dead.' He died, and so offered himself as a sacrifice of atonement to God; he rose again, and is entered within the veil, to continue the exercise of that office by his constant intercession. (3.) His kingly office is implied in that other expression, 'The Prince of the kings of the earth.' They are all his vicegerents, absolutely at his dispose, and can do neither more nor less than he will have them: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' He hath supreme and absolute authority given him over all things, both in heaven and earth, for the good of the church; and in the church he is the only head and king, to appoint and maintain the way and means of gathering, preserving, ruling the church, and ordering all the affairs thereof to the world's end.

2. Observe, that all these titles are suited to the present occasion of this prophecy, which is to encourage his people to suffer persecution for the gospel's sake. (1.) As he was 'The faithful Witness,' it assured their cause to be right. The gospel is called 'The testimony of Jesus Christ,' ver. 2. He declared nothing to us but the will of God. The flesh hath such a value for and tenderness of its interests, that men will soon distinguish themselves out of their duty if there be the least doubtfulness in the cause for which they suffer, or any suspicion of it. Therefore now, when dreadful troubles attended the profession of the gospel, he setteth forth Christ as 'The faithful Witness,' to heighten their zeal. As also, Rev. iii. 14, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.' (2.) As he was 'The first-begotten from the dead,' it still encourageth them more, by assuring them of a joyful resurrection if their lives should fall in this quarrel and conflict. This should allay all the fears of death. Christ is not called the first-born of the living, but the first-born from the dead, to own a relation to us in every condition, dead as well as living: he, as the first-born, rose as a pledge and pattern of what should be done to us. (3.) As 'Prince

of the kings of the earth,' of whose power and persecutions they were so much afraid, but needed not; for they are not only accountable to Christ at last, which those adverse powers little valued, having not embraced the profession of the gospel; but were held in by the reins of his government for the present, so as they could not so much as touch an hair of their heads without his leave. So that here was much encouragement for suffering christians, who at that time were to conflict with great difficulties, and exposed to the slaughters and butcheries of cruel enemies.

3. Observe, all these titles serve to beget a reverence and great respect in our hearts to the person that owneth them; he is 'The faithful Witness.' The great Prophet of the church should be regarded by us: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,' Mat. xvii. 5. We are to hearken to him, believe him, obey him, as knowing that we must stand or fall at the sentence of his word. He is the greatest and most excellent of all the prophets, and far above them all, who knew more of God and of his mind than all they joined in one; and hath declared his will more fully, clearly, and powerfully; and shall we set at nought his counsel? Some that despised the counsel of an ordinary prophet smarted for it: Heb. x. 28, 29, 'He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?' who came out of his bosom on purpose to teach us the way of salvation. If he require repentance and faith, with a promise of righteousness and eternal life, and a commination of eternal death unavoidable, if we believe not, nor repent, we are to believe it with all certainty, to set about this work with all care and diligence, and continue therein with all constancy and perseverance: Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.' Christ came from heaven at first, returned to heaven again, from heaven sent down the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, and by that Spirit enabled them to preach the gospel with success. Oh, surely we should attend to his doctrine, and receive it with firm assent, and obey it with humble submission.

Again, he is 'The first-begotten from the dead.' That he died should render him dear to us, for it was for our sakes, as I shall show by-and-by. That he rose again was for our sakes, for our justification: 'Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification,' Rom. iv. 25; for it sheweth that his sacrifice was accepted as sufficient for our atonement. Yea, for our blessed resurrection: 1 Cor. xv. 20, 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept;' as the whole harvest was blessed and sanctified in a little handful of the first-fruits offered to God. But I urge it now as an argument why we should give him glory, as deserving it by the greatness of his person. This made it evident that he was the Son of God: Rom. i. 4, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.' The true Messiah, and judge of the world: Acts xvii. 31, 'Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man



whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' If he had been an impostor, neither could he have raised up himself, being a mere man, nor would God have raised him up ; for we cannot imagine that divine providence would co-operate to countenance a lie or cheat. As then you would not be found enemies to Christ in his imperial day, give him glory and dominion. If you slight him, you despise one that is evidently declared to be the Son of God. And there is no medium ; either he must be your loving Saviour or your terrible judge. If you neglect him, he will not be the first-born from the dead to you, nor the first-fruits to you—the first-fruits did not bless the tares, or the cockle, or darnel, or filthy weeds, but only the good corn—though raised again you shall be by his judicial power.

Again, he is 'The Prince of the kings of the earth,' and therefore highly to be respected. Respect to great ones and fawning upon great ones is the practice of all the world ; all will seek the ruler's face. As all rivers run to the sea, so do all the respects of the world to the great and the mighty ; and is not the Son of God worthy of our respects, that is set down at the right hand of majesty above all ? If we did live by faith as much as by sense, we would see it is our interest as well as our duty to honour Christ ; we would not fear a mortal man, that can threaten us with a prison, but Christ, who can threaten us with hell ; nor be dismayed at the frowns of men when Christ smiles : 'Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ?' Rev. xv. 4. We would yield up ourselves to be his willing subjects, and obey his laws ; who can reward us, not with temporal dignities, but eternal life. The authority and power that all others have is but derived from Christ, and subordinate to him ; therefore, if he smiles, whose frowns need we fear ? He is the one lawgiver, that hath *potestatem vitæ et necis*, power of life and death ; he is able to destroy absolutely, and you may be safe in his protection. Well, then, if we consider what he is, he deserveth everlastingly to be honoured.

II. What he hath done for us, 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And there we begin—

First, With the fountain and bosom cause of all, and that is Christ's love : 'To him that loved us.'

1. Christ's love is the ground of man's redemption ; that stirred all the causes, and set them a-work, that concurred to this end. Other attributes were manifested in the redemption of mankind, as God's wisdom, power, justice, holiness ; but they are all subservient to love : but love is at the upper end of all causes, subservient to nothing but itself. If you ask a reason of other things, it may be assigned ; but if you ask a reason of his love, that cannot be given but from itself. If the question be, Wherefore did God discover such riches of wisdom, goodness, and power, for the saving poor worthless creatures ? He loved us : John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' Wherefore did Jesus Christ submit to such bitter agonies, such an accursed death ? He loved us : Eph. v. 2, 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour ;' Eph. v. 25, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it ;' and Gal. ii. 20,

'Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' But now put the question, Wherefore did he love us? Love only is the reason of itself; he loved us because he loved us: Deut. vii. 7, 8, 'The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, &c., but because the Lord loved you.'

2. As it is the fountain cause, so it was that property that shined forth most conspicuously in the work of redemption: Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' And therefore this is that which we should most admire and be ravished with in our thoughts. Here, next to the description of the excellency of Christ's person, the first thing mentioned in the doxology itself is this, 'To him that loved us.' This is a comfortable word, as if Jesus would be described and known by nothing so much as by his love. What was the Son of God but love incarnate, love born of a virgin, love conversing in the world, and preaching salvation to poor sinners; love going about and doing good; love relieving the diseased and the possessed, curing the deaf, and the dumb, and the blind, and the lame; and finally, love dying and hanging on the cross? 'God is love,' 1 John iv. 8. The angels in heaven adore this love, though spectators, not parties interested; he came not for their sakes, but ours only. We have a little notional knowledge of it, but could we once find the saving effects of God's love in Christ, impressed upon our hearts by the Spirit, how would you be melted and ravished, and ever be thinking what glory and honour you might bring to him that thus loved you? You and I may discourse of it; it is not a few cold thoughts of the love of Christ will work on us, but 'the shedding of this love abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost,' Rom. v. 5. There is no knowledge like the experimental knowledge which ariseth from the felt and known effects of this love; this would awaken your hopes, fill you with solid comfort, excite you to your duty: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' However, till you have this, the means you must use are sound belief and serious consideration.

[1.] Embracing by faith the love of God in Christ, and the good things prepared by it, as they are revealed and offered in the gospel; that is the way to get this fuller insight and experimental knowledge and feeling of this love; for so the apostle prayeth, Eph. iii. 17-19, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;' 1 John iv. 16, 'We have known and believed the love which God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'

[2.] The serious contemplation and meditation of it. It is your duty to study it with the deepest, serious, and most ponderous thoughts you can use: Eph. iii. 18, 'That we may comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it.' We are not to content ourselves with a superficial view of God's love in Christ, but must take an accurate inspection of it, in all the dimensions thereof, upward, downward, on the right hand and left. Narrow thoughts and shallow apprehensions do little good, either as to God's glory, or our solid comfort, and



that earnest constraint or encouragement to duty which it is wont to produce in the heart. We must neither do it slightly nor seldom. Our hearts are too narrow to understand it all at once; it is so vast and boundless, so rich and unsearchable, yea, infinite. We never know so much but there remaineth more still to be known. Therefore we must often renew the meditation, and continue it so long, till the heart be warmed, and ready to break out into praise; and till our wonder and admiration be raised, and we see the object too big for the faculty, for it is beyond all created understanding; till we be swallowed and overwhelmed in this deep and bottomless ocean, and through a penury of thoughts cry out, Oh, the depth of the riches of the mercy and love of God! For the present I shall content myself with four properties of this love.

(1.) It was a free love: 'I will love them freely,' Hosea xiv. 4. If he did not love us with a free love, how could he love us at all? What could he foresee in us but what was the effect of his own grace? We were neither loving nor lovely. Not loving; we did not prevent God. To love those that love us, it hath nothing singular; that is the ordinary courtesy of the world. By nature we were God's enemies, and what could an enemy deserve? Not lovely; all that grace that is wrought in us afterward is his gift; therefore this was at first a free love, that had no motive nor foundation but within itself. He loveth us, not because he seeth anything lovely or amiable in us, but only because he will demonstrate the absoluteness of his own will, and self-inclination to do us good.

(2.) It was a real love, not an empty complimenting love; it rested not in good wishes; there was great proof and manifestation of it: 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' It was such a love as made him leave the height of his glory, and assume our nature, and die in that nature, and shed his blood, and by it wash us from our sins. There was a benevolence in it, and a beneficence also. A man may wish health when another is sick, and supplies when another is poor; but Christ did not wish us well only; but as fire sheweth itself by heat and by light, so love by the real effects of it. Perhaps thou sayest to another, Believe that I love thee; but while this is only professed in words, he may believe it, but he cannot see it; but if upon occasion you do anything for him, or expose yourself to danger for his sake, then he saith, Now I see that thou lovest me. So God to Abraham: Gen. xxii. 12, 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.' Here is a plain proof and signal evidence. So here; Christ hath demonstrated the reality of his love; the man seeth it.

(3.) It was eminent and transcendent love. Compare it with the love of one creature to another, and in all the world you cannot find a parallel to equal it: John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.' But where is that rare instance of friendship? Rom. v. 6-8, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a

righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us.' He died, the just for the unjust, the judge for the offender, God for sinners. It can be resembled by no love upon earth; therefore he himself compareth his love to lost sinners with the Father's love to him: John xv. 9, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.' It is eternal, incomprehensible, and unchangeable.

(4.) It was a full love, removing our misery, procuring all blessings for us, to make us completely happy; for as it fetched us from the lowest hell, it leaveth us not till it bringeth us to joys and happiness in the highest heavens: 1 Thes. v. 9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' Well, then, if I should stop here, I hope you have so much ingenuity and sense of your Redeemer's affection to you as to say, 'To him be glory and dominion, even to him who loved us.'

Secondly, The signal act of his love to us: 'He washed us from our sins in his own blood.'

1. Observe, this is put as the great instance of his love. We cannot know the love of God by any other fruit and benefit till this be done. By the bounty of his general providence he provideth for all his creatures, and feedeth them, and maintaineth them in that kind of being unto which he hath raised them out of nothing. So he supplieth the young ravens and the beasts of the field; much more is he good to mankind; he giveth them food and raiment convenient for them, and beareth with them notwithstanding their renewed provocations: Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' The heathen might trace God by acts of bounty rather than acts of vengeance. But hereby they can have no assurance of God's special love to them; for 'No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before them,' Eccles. ix. 1. Thou canst not say, God giveth me riches, therefore he loveth me; or sendeth me poverty, therefore he hateth me. No; he may give these things to his enemies, and deny them to his friends; but you may undoubtedly conclude, He loveth me, for he hath washed me from my sins. Clear this once, and you have a full and concluding proof of God's special love to you.

2. The value and worth of this benefit is exceeding great. This will appear if you consider—

[1.] The necessity of it. We were all defiled with sin, which is such a filthiness and stain as cannot easily be washed away. The party displeased and provoked is God, and the party defiled is the immortal soul of man, which being subject to the power of God, and bound by his laws, upon disobedience is conscious to itself of the merit of death and punishment, and debarred from all communion with God. And it cannot have any sound peace till it knows that God is satisfied, and that it shall be admitted again into terms of grace and favour with him. That sin hath made us filthy and loathsome to God, that we cannot please him, nor be accepted with him, the word doth not only assert it:



Ps. xiv. 2, 3, 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one;' Job xv. 14, 'What is man, that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?' Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' But conscience is in part sensible of it, so that a sinner hath a secret dread and shyness of God, especially upon the commission of actual sins: 1 John iii. 20, 21, 'For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' I know generally man looketh to the foulness and cleanness of the body, but is insensible of the stain of the soul. Yet we cannot always exempt, no, not the worst, from a secret sense of this. However, our misery and happiness dependeth upon God's judgment, not our own; if in the eye of God all of us are polluted and unclean, lying in our blood, defiled with the guilt of sin already committed, and the filthy vileness of sin yet indwelling. This is evident, we were miserable enough till God found out a remedy; and this misery is the deeper, because man loveth what God loatheth; as the swine loveth wallowing in the mire, and therefore it is a creature loathsome to us. We count sin a bravery, when it is the greatest impurity, a filthiness deeply ingrained in our natures, and therefore not easily washed away, both as to the guilt, as also to the stain and blot.

[2.] This being our misery, Christ came to wash us, and with no other laver than his own blood, as a priest offering himself a sacrifice for our sins. The remedy for so great a mischief must have a noble and excellent cause. That blood was necessary appeareth by the types of the law, for the typical expiation was made by the blood of bulls and goats offered in sacrifice. And that no blood but the blood of Jesus Christ would serve the turn is evident, if you consider the party displeased and provoked, who was God; the party defiled, the immortal spirit of man; and the heinous nature of the offence, which was a breach of his righteous and eternal law. Therefore it is said, 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;' Heb. i. 3, 'He by himself purged our sins;' and Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?' There is virtue and efficacy enough in the blood of Christ, partly from the institution of God, and its own manifold worth and value, as being the blood of God; partly by the way and manner in which it was offered, by an act done in our nature, of the greatest obedience and self-denial that ever was or can be, and so God is fully repaired in point of honour.

[3.] This sacrifice thus offered was accepted of God in the behalf of sinful man, as a full price and merit to procure for us both justification and sanctification. We needed both, being polluted both with the guilt and stain of sin. Both are a trouble to a sensible conscience or an awakened sinner, who is in the next capacity to receive this sacrifice:

1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As a man that hath broken his leg is not only troubled with the pain, but would have it set right again. Both are implied in this washing, and both are effectually accomplished by virtue of his bloody death and sacrifice: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And Christ hath obtained both by virtue of his bloody death and sacrifice for our pardon and restitution to God's grace and favour: Rom. v. 1, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' As also the gift of the Spirit, to sanctify and renew us to the image of God: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

[4.] Besides the impetration of this benefit, we must consider the application. The sacrifice had power to purge us and wash us from our sins, as soon as it was offered and accepted of God. The procuring of the power is the impetration, which was antecedent to actual pardon and sanctification; therefore it is said, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high,' Heb. i. 3. Then he interposed the merit; then was the first grant made or liberty given. But then for the application: It is applied when we submit to those terms that are agreed upon between our Redeemer and God, as our supreme judge and lawgiver. As when this sacrifice is believed and depended on, and pleaded in an humble and broken-hearted manner, and improved to thankfulness, and resolutions to return to the obedience of our creator, then is sin actually pardoned, and our hearts cleansed. He did not pardon, nor cleanse, nor sanctify, as soon as this blood was shed upon the cross, until it be effectually applied to the filthy soul by a lively faith: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' and a serious and broken-hearted repentance: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' We must bewail our sins, depend upon the sacrifice of Christ, sue out the virtue of it by prayer: Ps. li. 2, 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' Extinguish the love of sin by godly sorrow and all holy means, and mortify the flesh by the help of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body,' &c.; and more and more interest ourselves in his cleansing.

[5.] Because the application is a difficult work. Besides the purchase of the gift of the Spirit, Christ hath instituted the help of the word and sacraments, to bring us into possession of this benefit: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' The merit of his death falleth upon these means, that we may use them with the more confidence: John xv. 3, 'Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' The word is the glass wherein to see corruption, which sets a-work to seek purging; by that our sense of our natural impurity is revived, the means and causes of our cleansing set down, that we may with deep humiliation confess our sin, humbly



sue out the grace offered, and wait for it in the conscionable use of all the means of grace. And for the sacraments: As the word containeth the charter and grant of Christ and all his benefits to those that will receive him, so this is the seal of the grant: Rom. iv. 11, 'He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith;' whereby we are more confirmed in waiting for the Spirit, and excited to look for this benefit from Christ. Well, then, we must still lie at the pool of the word and sacraments.

And now you have my second argument why Jesus Christ should be honoured, lauded, and praised by all the saints; because he hath done so great an office of love, and procured so great a benefit for us, as the washing away of our sins in his blood, that we might be admitted to communion with God.

III. The fruits and benefits that we have thereby: 'He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and to his Father.' This doth oblige us the more to ascribe, and give glory and dominion to him for ever and ever, since he hath brought us into communion with God, and set us apart as consecrated persons, such as kings and priests were of old, to perform daily service to God.

In this third thing—

1. Observe the order. We must be washed from our sins before we can be kings and priests, or minister before the Lord. Aaron and his sons, though they were formerly designed to be priests, yet they could not officiate and act as priests before they were consecrated. So must we be consecrated and made priests to God, and that by the blood of Christ. They were seven days in consecrating. This whole life is the time of our consecration, which goeth on by degrees, and will be made complete, both for body and soul, upon the resurrection, when we shall be fit to approach the throne of glory, and serve our God in a perfect manner, in the eternal temple of heaven. For this life, though our consecration be not finished, yet here we are styled an holy priesthood, to minister before the throne of grace, though not before the throne of glory. Now, if we be washed from our sins in the laver of regeneration, we may draw near to God, as the priests under the law were washed in the laver, and then came to the altar. It holdeth good both in this life and in the life to come, that none but the washed can come so near to God, either before the throne of grace or throne of glory. The throne of grace: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' So Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' In the state of glory: Rev. vii. 14, 15, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.' The persecuted saints, who came out of great tribulation, they first washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, before they were admitted, as priests, to stand before the throne of God, to serve him day and night in his temple. Sanctification must go before consecration; and the more sanctified, the more consecrated. When our

sanctification is finished, then our consecration is consummate; and then we shall have a full communion with our God, a clear vision of his eternal beauty, and as great a fruition of his godhead as we shall be capable of, in a state of full contentment, joy, and blessedness.

2. The privileges are exceedingly great, to be consecrated to so high a dignity; that we should be consecrated or set apart for God, to be objects of his special grace, and instruments of his glory and service. Much more, that we should be advanced to so great a dignity as to be kings and priests to God. We share in Christ's own dignity. He was a king and a priest, so are we; he had an unction, so have we; he was Christ, we are christians: by virtue of our union with him, we are partakers of his kingdom and priesthood. The church of Israel was called 'a kingdom of priests,' *Exod. xix. 6*; and believers in the new testament are called 'a royal priesthood,' *1 Peter ii. 9*; not to disturb civil kings, or the order God hath instituted in the church; for it is kings and priests 'to God,' not to the world. Let us consider these privileges asunder.

[1.] Kings. King is a name of honour, power, and ample possession.

(1.) Here we reign spiritually, as we vanquish the devil, the world, and the flesh in any measure. It is a princely thing to be above these inferior things, and to trample them under our feet in an holy and heavenly pride. An heathen could say, *Rex est qui metuit nihil, rex est qui cupit nihil*—He is a king that fears nothing, and desires nothing. He that is above the hopes and fears of the world. He that hath his heart in heaven, and is above temporal accidents, the ups and downs of the world, the world beneath his heart and affections, this man is of a kingly spirit. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, neither is a believer's: *Rev. v. 10*, 'Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth,' viz., in a spiritual way. It is a beastly thing to serve our lusts, but kingly to have our conversations in heaven, and vanquish the world: *1 John v. 4, 5*, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' To live up to our faith and love with a noble royal spirit.

(2.) Hereafter we shall reign visibly and gloriously, when we shall sit upon thrones with Christ, at his last coming to judge the world, and angels themselves: *Mat. xix. 28*, 'Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' *Luke xxii. 29, 30*, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' This was spoken at the Lord's supper, which is a pledge of it: 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning,' *Psa. xlix. 14*.

(3.) They shall be kings eternally in heaven: *Luke xii. 32*, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' *2 Tim. ii. 12*, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;' that is, in heaven. With respect to this right, title, and interest, so they are made kings. We are heirs in Christ: *Rom. viii. 17*, 'If



children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ : if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' We are heirs of a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

[2.] Priests. That was a great dignity among the Jews. To this all christians are now advanced : 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Our sacrifices are not expiatory, but gratulatory ; not sin-offerings, but thank-offerings ; not typical, but spiritual. Jesus Christ is the only sin-offering. Our thank-offerings are either ourselves : Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Or our duties, which are spiritual offerings. We offer not beasts, which were typical, but the calves of our lips, our prayers and praises : Heb. xiii. 15, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually ; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' Or alms : ver. 16, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased ;' Phil. iv. 18, 'But I have all, and abound ; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you ; an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.' Now this is a great honour, that we should be separated by the Lord from all the rest of the world, and admitted into such a nearness and access to God with boldness, and hope of being accepted through Christ.

*Use 1.* In the general, all this should stir up our hearts to give continual praise and glory to Christ our blessed Redeemer. So doth the apostle here ; that is the use he maketh of it : 'To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.' It is a thing to be reprov'd in christians that we take so little time to admire, honour, and praise our Redeemer, which yet is a great part of our work. Surely if you had a due sight of his excellency, or a sense and taste of the riches of his goodness and love, you would be more in this delightful work. Usually praise is a stranger to our worship ; and however we are enlarged in confession of sin or supplication for such things as we want, yet we are straitened in our gratulations. Surely lauding and praising God in Christ is as necessary as the other parts of worship : Ps. xxii. 3, God is said to 'inhabit the praises of Israel ;' that is, in Israel, where he is praised. The great end of worship is not the relief of man so much as the honour of God ; therefore we should not only ask things needful for ourselves, and mind merely the supply of our necessities, but the honour of Christ : Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.' If God will account it an honour to be well thought of and spoken of by his creature, we should more abound in this work. Why are we then so scanty in praises and thanksgivings ? The reasons of this defect are self-love ; we are eager to have blessings, but we forget to return to give God the glory. Prayer is a work of necessity, but praise is a work of mere duty. Self-love puts all upon prayer, but the love of God upon praise. Again, stupid negligence ; we do not gather up matter of thanksgiving, nor watch in our prayers, nor seek after matter for it : Col. iv. 2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.'

2. More particularly, let us take our example from this doxology, 'To

him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.' We can but ascribe to Christ what he hath already, but we must do it heartily. Observe here—(1.) The things ascribed to Christ, 'Glory and dominion.' (2.) The manner of ascription; it is imperative. (3.) The duration, 'For ever and ever.' (4.) The seal of all, in the word 'Amen.'

[1.] The things ascribed to Christ, 'Glory and dominion.' In other places it is honour and power everlasting: 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen.' In the Lord's prayer more fully: Mat. vi. 13, 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.' Where by 'kingdom' is meant right and authority to dispose of all things according to his own pleasure; by 'power,' strength and all-sufficiency to execute what he pleaseth; by 'glory,' his honour, which is the result of all that he doth. *Clara cum laude notitia*—Excellency discovered with praise. We desire that he may be more honoured, and brought into request and esteem in the world. Here we have but two words, 'glory' and 'dominion.' 'Glory,' that is, just praise and esteem; gracious hearts think they can never set Christ high enough in their esteem and praise; this is all they can return to him for his great benefits. 'Glory,' that he may have the honour, as they the comfort. 'Dominion' implieth lordship and sovereignty; this they would have given to Christ as his due by his own purchase and God's assignment: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' It was God's end: Phil. ii. 10, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.'

[2.] The form is imperative, as binding themselves and others to give him glory and dominion. Themselves in the first place, and that not only with the tongue, but with the heart; not only in word, but in deed. So they would give him glory, praise him with their lips, and honour him with their lives. They would make that their work and scope, that this may be the real language of their hearts and actions, which speak much louder than words. These 'show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9, that really they may be the glory of Christ: 2 Cor. viii. 23, 'They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ;' 2 Thes. i. 12, 'That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' So for dominion; the practical acknowledgment is better than the verbal: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Christ was mocked when they cried, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' Mat. xxvii. 29, and yet they crucified him. If we would have dominion given to Christ, we must look upon ourselves as not our own, but his; not live to ourselves, or use ourselves for ourselves, but resign up ourselves absolutely to him. Then for others, such is their love to Christ and the souls of men, that true christians desire that Christ may not only be glorified by themselves, but others; that he may be known, worshipped, and believed on in the world, especially those about them; as fire turneth all things about it into fire.



[3.] The duration, 'For ever and ever.' In all doxologies a long duration is expressed. They desire not only the present age may glorify God, but the future. When we are dead and gone, the Lord remaineth, and they would not have him remain without praise and honour. It is the comfort of their souls, when dying, that God shall have a people to praise him; and they prize their own salvation the more, that they shall live for ever to glorify God; that, as God's blessings are everlasting, so shall be their praises.

[4.] It is ratified by a solemn attestation, 'Amen.' It is *nota desiderii et supplicationis*; by it we testify our fervent affection, and strength of desire after the glory of Christ. We should have an Amen for our praises as well as for our prayers; not only to say, 'Jesus, master, have mercy on us, Amen;' but, 'To him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.'

## SERMON II.

*And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.*

REV. i. 6.

I SHALL take up this subject again, and speak of our priesthood, when we shall be admitted into the immediate presence of God, and praise him for evermore. There is a ministration before the throne of grace, or before the throne of glory; before the throne of grace we minister in this life, before the throne of glory in the life to come. Of the latter I shall now speak, because it is a truth commonly overlooked.

*Doct.* That the priesthood which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the heavenly temple.

I shall prove it by these arguments—

1. Because a christian is conformed to Christ, and made like him in all things. Christ must *πρωτεύειν*, first it in all things: Col. i. 18, 'That in all things he might have the pre-eminence;' Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren.' Now if I shall prove to you that Christ was not consecrated to his everlasting priesthood till he died, then it is very congruous that it should be so with a christian; for our office dependeth upon his, and is carried on in a way of conformity to his. Now, that Christ was consecrated at his death, I prove by these places: Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;' that is, when he had 'learned obedience by the things which he suffered,' ver. 8. And Heb. ii. 10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings;' that is, fully consecrated, and fitted to be a priest, to perform that office to our comfort. His death is expressed by a notion of perfection: Luke xiii. 32, 'Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;' that is, shall suffer death. It is good to

inquire in what sense, in these and in many other places, Christ is said to be made perfect ; it is not meant of his personal perfection, but official. As to his person, as he was God, he was perfect from all eternity ; as God-man, he was perfect from the first moment of his conception. The word *τελειωθείς*, 'being made perfect,' relateth to his office, and may be rendered 'consecrated,' as well as 'made perfect ;' 'being consecrated, he became,' &c. ; and 'it behoved the captain of our salvation to be consecrated through sufferings.' The word signifieth, in its first sense, to finish and accomplish a thing. That which is brought to an end is perfected ; so was Christ as a priest perfected ; that is, fit to minister before God as a priest. But that it should be rendered consecrated I prove—

[1.] Because the word is rendered consecrated elsewhere : Heb. vii. 28, 'Consecrated for evermore.' In the margin, 'perfected,' *τετελειωμένον*. What is in the old testament, 'Thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons,' Exod. xxix. 9, the Septuagint render, *καὶ τελειώσεις Ἀαρὼν τὰς χειρὰς*, thou shalt perfect, or fill the hand of Aaron and his sons. And the sacrifice of consecration is called *θυσία τῆς τελειώσεως*, the sacrifice of perfecting or completing, because the priest was to pass through some ceremonies ; and these being done, he is said *τελειοῦσθαι*, to be consummate, or made perfect, or fully authorised to perform the priest's office.

[2.] I prove it from the context in Heb. v. There the apostle is discoursing of Christ's everlasting priesthood, and his being made perfect is with respect to that office. He was not perfect or fitted for that work till he stood before God with a sacrifice in his hand, till he had offered up himself with prayers, and tears, and strong cries, and had learned obedience by the things which he suffered ; but then he was made perfect, for the rites of his consecration were over ; that is, his agonies and bloody sufferings ; then he was fully consecrated and completed to be a priest. So that Christ's solemn consecration was at his death.

[3.] The reason of the thing sheweth it. Jesus Christ was to be 'a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,' Heb. ii. 17. These two attributes, 'merciful' and 'faithful,' refer to God and us. Merciful to help and relieve sinful miserable man ; faithful with respect to God, in performing all things which belong to his sacerdotal office, and going through with his work given him in charge, till he hath fully finished it. The best and most merciful high priest that ever was must be made in the best and most convenient manner. Well, then, he is made perfect when he hath had a thorough sense of our misery, and took the course prescribed to remove it ; when his heart was enlarged, and his hand was filled with the purest sacrifice that ever was offered ; and so by his agonies and bloody sufferings he was perfected, consecrated, and fully qualified to minister before the Lord, and to intercede for poor creatures, and to bless them with the blessing of eternal life. His priestly actions after the order of Aaron were his consecration to his everlasting blessed priesthood after the order of Melchisedec. Without these sufferings he could neither be a faithful nor a merciful high priest, nor satisfy his Father's justice, nor have a



full feeling from experience of the creatures' misery. Well, then, as Christ was consecrated at his death, so is a christian who runneth parallel with Christ in all his offices. As Christ had an inauguration into that priesthood he executed upon earth at his baptism, so hath a christian for his spiritual priesthood; as soon as washed in the laver of regeneration, but for his everlasting priesthood at death.

2. My next argument is, this suiteth with the other privilege of kings. We are made kings as well as priests. Now, as our kingly office is not perfect till we come to heaven, so neither our priestly; and therefore it mainly respecteth our ministration in the heavenly temple. How is a poor christian a king here, unless in a riddle, *ἐν αἰνύματι*, as he vanquisheth the devil, the world, and the flesh? as it is a princely thing to be above inferior things, and to trample them under our feet. The heathen could say, *Rex est qui metuit nihil, rex est qui cupit nihil*—He is a king that is above the hopes and fears of the world, that feareth nothing and desireth nothing. This is indeed, in a metaphor, a kingly spirit, to have our hearts in heaven, and to look upon all sublunary things as beneath our care and affections. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, neither is a believer's. Here upon earth we reign only in a spiritual way; but the privilege cometh fully to be verified when we tread Satan under our feet, and triumph over enemies, and reign visibly and gloriously, sitting upon thrones with Christ at his coming, judging the world and angels themselves: Mat. xix. 28, 'Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' Luke xxii. 29, 30, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' Ps. xlix. 14, 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;' and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 'Know ye not that we shall judge the world?' and ver. 3, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' neither will this kingdom be terminated and ended at the day of judgment, but they shall be kings eternal in heaven: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;' that is, in heaven. With respect to this title, right, and interest, we are said 'to be made kings.' Now proportionably, the other privilege, of 'being made priests,' must be expounded also. We are spiritual priests upon earth; we have our sacrifices of prayers, praises and alms, and devoting ourselves to God; but this office is not completed till we come to heaven, and do immediately minister before the Lord. Then we have entrance into the holiest: Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' Not in spirit, but in person; for if the chief part of our kingly office be yet behind, why not the chief part of our priestly office also?

3. Then we are qualified and prepared. Sanctification must go before consecration; and the more sanctified, the more consecrated; and when our sanctification is finished, then our consecration is consummated, and not till then. Now in this world our justification and sanctification is imperfect; we are not got above our legal fears,

and grace is very weak in us. You know before we can serve the living God 'our consciences must be purged from dead works,' Heb. ix. 14, as the high priest was not to approach God without his washings lest he die; and we are bidden to 'draw nigh to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,' Heb. x. 22. If we have the privilege of priests, we must perform the duties of priests. Now we are not perfect as appertaining to the conscience, nor are we fully cleansed and sanctified, till the veil of the flesh be removed, and we be presented to God without spot and wrinkle. Somewhat is begun indeed, that will tend to, and end in, perfect sanctification, enough to qualify us for our ministration at this distance from God. There is enough done on Christ's part, by way of impetration and merit: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' or consecrated; he hath paid the price; but as to the application, that is by degrees. The priest under the law was seven days in consecrating; this figured all the time that interveneth before we enter upon the everlasting sabbath. Our whole life is the time of consecration, which goeth on by degrees, and will be made complete, both for body and soul, at the resurrection; for then shall we be made fit to approach the throne of glory, and serve our God in a perfect manner in the eternal temple of heaven. In this life our consecration is not yet finished, we cannot come so near God. We are qualified indeed to come to the throne of grace, but not qualified to come to the throne of glory; but the work is a-doing, and in time it will be accomplished.

4. We have not the full privileges of priests till then, which is intimacy, full communion, nearness of access to God, and ministration before him. This is the privilege we have as priests. The apostle telleth us, Heb. ix. 8, 'The Holy Ghost signifieth that the way to the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.' How did the Holy Ghost signify this? I answer—By the whole economy and frame of that dispensation. God kept state and majesty then, and his people must not come too near him; the common Israelite must not come too near the sanctuary; they were not to camp or pitch their tents round about it, but only the Levites, lest they die: Num. i. 52, 53, 'And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard throughout the host. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel.' It was a dangerous thing for the common Israelites to be too near the symbols of God's presence; to teach us the distance between God and men, and their unworthiness to come near him and his holy things. But though the Levites might encamp near it, yet none but the priests must enter into the tabernacle: Num. iv. 18–20, 'Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the Kohathites from among the Levites; but this do unto them, that they may live, and not die; when they approach unto the most holy things, Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service, and to his burden: but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.' They were to keep near the tabernacle, and the Kohathites to bear



things which they must not see and touch, upon pain of death. And this was not only threatened, but executed on the Bethshemites, which was a city of Levites, when they looked into the ark: 1 Sam. vi. 19, 20, 'And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. And the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?' Well, God kept at a distance from that people, and would not have them too familiar with him; but the priests might come near and minister before the Lord, but not till they were consecrated, and till they had cleansed themselves: Exod. xxx. 20, 21, 'When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; and when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto the Lord. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not.' But though an ordinary priest might come to the altar of burnt-offering, yet the high priest was only to enter into the sacrary, or holiest of all; and that not when he pleased, but only once a year: Lev. xvi. 2, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not.' The high priest was a solemn type of Christ, yet he was not to be too familiar with God. The people were sensible of this state and distance which God kept, and murmured at it: Num. xvii. 12, 13, 'And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish; whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord, shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?' What did the Holy Ghost signify by all this? That the way of the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. But now God is more familiar with his people; a christian hath the privilege of the high priest, a privilege which the most eminent person of that dispensation could enjoy but once a year, in the most solemn service which ever he performed, and that not till after many washings and purifications. In every time of need we may come to the throne of grace. It was dangerous heretofore to thrust themselves upon God, but now the Lord is willing to admit us into his presence; gospel-believers may come to him, the fountain of grace is not inaccessible. Well, but though we may come to the throne of grace, we cannot come to the throne of glory, thence we are all shut out; no man can immediately approach the throne of glory till he be both fully and perfectly justified and sanctified; for the present we are not fit to come nigh him; as Absalom, when his peace was made, and he was permitted to come home to Jerusalem, yet he was not admitted to his father's sight and presence: 2 Sam. xiv. 24, 'The king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face.' And Esther, when chosen for a spouse for the great king Ahasuerus, yet she was to 'accomplish the months of her purification,' Esther ii. 12. We have access to the throne of grace, that is all we can have in this life; but hereafter we shall have access to the throne of glory, then we shall have full communion with our God, and a clear vision of his eternal

beauty, and as great a fruition of his godhead as we shall be capable of, in a state of full contentment, joy, and blessedness.

5. If there be a temple in the other world, then there are priests, and there will be a ministration; but now heaven is often represented as a temple. As the temple under the law was a type of Christ, in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily, and a type of the church, in which God manifesteth his power and presence; so also it was a type of heaven, and so frequently applied. As in the temple there were three partitions, the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; so is there the airy heaven, the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, as it is called, Acts iii. 21, 'Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things;' and the third heaven: 2 Cor. xii. 2, 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, such an one caught up to the third heaven.' This third heaven, the seat of God and of the blessed saints, is often called 'the holiest,' with respect to the type in the temple or sanctuary. Therefore that is called 'a worldly sanctuary,' Heb. ix. 1, and 'holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true;' that is, heaven itself, ver. 24. The earthly or worldly sanctuary was the throne and palace of God, residing as a king in the midst of his people, which figured or shadowed a more excellent throne and palace, which is heaven, where God doth manifest his presence in a far more glorious manner. Well, then, in this temple must we minister, and be admitted to a nearer attendance upon God.

6. One great part of our sacrifices and oblations remaineth everlastingly to be done by us, and that is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; it is a great branch of the thank-offerings of the gospel: Heb. xiii. 15, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' And in heaven they cease not. Prayer suiteth more with our imperfect state, when we are compassed about with divers infirmities and necessities; but the angels praise God, and so do the blessed spirits. We shall then have a fuller sense of the mercies and goodness of God, when our redemption is full and complete, and a clearer sight of his excellencies when we see him face to face. Here we do but tune our instruments, and prepare for the work of heaven, but then we perform it. We are here but as learners, when we see God by faith, and understand a little of the love of Christ, but then as practisers. Therefore certainly to be kings and priests unto God doth not respect the present life only, but our ministration in the heavenly temple. There is a 'for ever' always affixed to the doxologies of the saints, to show that now they do but begin in the work which they shall complete hereafter.

7. The scriptures do plainly express that our service is not ended with our lives, but, as we still stand in the relation of creatures to God, so we still glorify him and serve him: Rev. vii. 14-16, 'And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in the temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, and they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more,' &c. There is the explanation of the mystery of being washed in Christ's



blood, and made kings and priests unto God. This office they chiefly perform when they come to enjoy their happiness before the throne of God and in the heavenly temple. And what is the work there? They serve him day and night; they do not their service then by fits and starts, but constantly. A type whereof were the priests under the law, who, in their courses, were admitted day and night to be in the temple: Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 'Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.' But what was done by many in their turns is now done by the same persons continually; for they are never weary, and there is no intermission in their service. And God always dwelleth amongst them; they shall not be at a distance from God, nor he at a distance from them; but they shall still enjoy his company, as dwelling in one house with him; for there shall not be sin nor sorrow any more, and then shall they praise God cheerfully. This will be our work when we are admitted into the most holy place.

8. As heaven hath the notion of a place, a temple, so our estate in heaven hath the notion of a day or time wherein our priesthood is to be solemnly exercised; for it is called *σαββατισμὸς*, a sabbath or rest: Heb. iv. 9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.' A sabbath is for holy rest, not a time of idleness, but to be religiously employed; so this glorious eternal rest, which is prepared for and promised to believers, is not passed over in ease and idleness, but in acts of worship and adoration. It is a rest from toil and labour, but not from work and service. On the sabbath-day the sacrifices were doubled; the priest had more to do upon that day than any other; so in our everlasting sabbatism, we serve God after a more perfect manner than now we do. On the sabbath, a special delight and rejoicing in God was to be raised: Isa. lviii. 13, 14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' So in our eternal rest shall we delight ourselves in his presence.

Use 1. It informeth us—

1. That our service is an honour, and worship a privilege; for it is not only a way to heaven, but a beginning of heaven. Our work there is a part of our reward. The priestly ministration is so the work of heaven, that it is also a reward for our present diligence. Well, then, it is the most blessed life we can live upon earth, to be serving God and ministering before the Lord, and to be employed in any nearness about him; his people desire no sweeter work. Alas! what is the work of all the world to this but a toilsome drudgery or base servility? Go to the brutish world, what is the work of the drunkard, glutton, gamester, or fornicator, compared with that of the spiritual priest? They are priests to feed the belly, that base dunghill-god: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose god is their belly.' Their business is to provide for and please the flesh. Nay; go to the more refined part of the world, the covetous and ambitious worldlings; they aim at nothing beyond this life; but

the spiritual priest continueth for ever ; his service is begun, and will ever last ; his work is his wages.

2. That it is no easy matter to be familiar with God, and to draw nigh to him in worship. We are stupid, and therefore not sensible of it. You see what distance God kept under the law, and what distance he yet keepeth as to his immediate presence. Surely 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him,' Ps. lxxxix. 7. The redeemed are honoured to have access to God with boldness, yet they ought to be humbly sensible of the privilege. Every nearer approach to God is an enlargement of honour. We must keep an even hand between natural bondage and irreverence. Natural bondage ; we are sometimes afraid to come into God's presence, and doubt of access, being so unworthy to come before the Lord ; but we are privileged by our calling ; Christ by his death hath made us kings and priests. The priests were sanctified to draw nearer unto God than the common people, and to be employed in his most holy service ; so if we be cleansed by the blood of Christ, we are separated from the ungodly world, and may acquaint him with all our desires, griefs, and fears. On the other side, against irreverence. It is no easy matter to come before the Lord as we ought to do ; and we must be sure to bless and thank the Redeemer for this favour, that we are made priests of God and Christ, that we are freed from the fears of the second death : Rev. xx. 6, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ ;' and we may hope for a more solemn service.

Use 2. To exhort the children of God—

1. To long and hope for the time of their ministration in the heavenly temple. When the time of our consecration is finished, then we shall be admitted into this blessed estate. Oh, comfort yourselves with the forethought of it ! There are many reasons to induce us—

[1.] Because then we shall see him whom we worship, and stand before his throne. This is often promised : Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness ;' 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' So 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ;' John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' Now it is a blessed thing to see what we love, and possess what we see. The priests here, though they do not worship an unknown God, yet they worship an unseen God. The Romans, when they brake into the *sanctum sanctorum*, and saw no image there, gave out that the high priest did worship the clouds. The world suspecteth the God whom we worship ; but there we see him face to face, with a clear and distinct vision : 2 Cor. v. 7, 'For we walk by faith, not by sight.' There vision succeedeth in the room of faith, fruition of hope, and perfect love of that weak adherence which now we put forth towards God. If God should suffer himself to be seen by his creature in the condition to which sin hath reduced him, it would prove rather a ground of fear and astonishment than of love and fruition ; or else the majesty



must be clouded with some allay of condescension, which would not sufficiently reveal him to us. The immediate presence of God, which is our felicity in heaven, would be our misery upon earth. The scripture telleth us, *Exod. xxxiii. 20*, 'No man shall see him and live.' And *Manoah, Judges xiii. 22*, 'We shall surely die, because we have seen God.' We cannot look upon this glorious sun but we are in danger of losing our life together with our sight. The scripture sometimes maketh God to dwell in darkness, sometimes in light inaccessible, to note the incapacity of our faculties, and the incomprehensible splendour of his glorious majesty. We are not able to pierce through this darkness or endure this light. But the majesty of God is not there formidable, but comfortable; for we shall behold the glorious God in a glorified estate, both of soul and body.

[2.] We shall serve him perfectly, and without weakness, weariness, and distraction.

(1.) Here is weakness. What dull and low conceptions have we of God! What heartless, irreverent, and poor expressions of his glorious excellency whenever we come to worship before him! such as should make us ashamed to open our lips before the Lord: *Isa. vi. 5*, 'Woe is me, for I am undone,' saith the prophet *Isaiah*, 'for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Or as *Job, chap. xl. 4*, 'Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.' The best of God's servants, when their eyes are but a little opened to see the glory of that God they speak to, how sensible would they be of the shortness of their apprehension and expressions of that God they speak to! Alas! how can such narrow hearts frame an apprehension, or receive an impression of such an infinite greatness and eternal goodness as there is in God! But when we shall see him as he is, then we shall better praise him, and conceive more suitably of him.

(2.) Here is weariness, and we cannot endure long under our weak duties, neither as to the frame of body nor mind; but there God in communion is always new and fresh to us every moment. And the more we look upon the object, the more is the faculty fortified and strengthened in conversing with God: *Mat. xviii. 10*, 'In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' The blessed spirits are never weary of beholding God, and enjoying his glorious presence.

(3.) Here is distraction. We pretend, when we worship God, to leave the world, and turn the back upon all things else, and to set ourselves before the throne of God; but alas! we bring the flesh along with us, and that will have its excursions, and so our hearts are stolen away from under Christ's own arm. We mingle sulphur with our incense, groan under divers infirmities: 'We cannot do what we would do,' *Gal. v. 17*. But there is nothing to divert us from thinking of God; there is no blemish in priest or sacrifice; nothing will appear in us displeasing unto God, which is a comfort in our present weaknesses.

[3.] We shall then serve God uninterruptedly; for there shall be no impediment of business, nor need of sleep. Here earthly occasions straiten Christ, and crowd up his interest in the soul, and we spend

almost half our time in sleep, not showing one act of thankfulness to God; but then 'we shall be ever with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. We shall always stand before his throne of glory, and abide in his blessed presence. Our labour shall not need repose, nor shall the night ever draw a curtain upon that day. There will be no miseries, wants, and necessities to distract us, and take off our minds. The whole strength of our souls is carried out to God, and our time is spent wholly and only in worshipping and serving God. Constant and perpetual solemn service is a celestial privilege, and they that serve God most uninterruptedly come nearest heaven, for there Christ is ever with us, and we ever with him: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' When absent from the body, we are present with the Lord, and shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

[4.] There we are admitted into a nearer communion with God than now in this mortal estate. We draw nigh to him now, but we are not so nigh but there is some distance; but in the palace of glory our approach will be so near as to take away all distance, and we shall have immediate and full communion with God. Now God is in heaven and we upon earth, we receive no more of God than an ordinance can convey to us. Here and there he droppeth in a little comfort and quickening into the soul; the pipe cannot convey much, and the vessel can hold less; the means are narrow, and the person is not capacitated to be filled up with all the fulness of God; but then the Lord will do his work by himself, the means shall not straiten him; God will communicate himself without means, and be instead of all means; he will be all in all, and therefore will communicate his grace in full perfection. The more we draw nigh to God here, the more like him. Moses, while he conversed with God in the mount, his face shone. Christ was transformed in his prayers: Luke ix. 29, 'And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.' So by proportion in heaven; the nearer we draw to God, the more we enjoy of him: 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Perfection of holiness is the glory and happiness of the saints in heaven; as iron by lying in the fire seemeth to be all fire; when it is red-hot the qualities of fire are imprinted on it; so we, by being ever with the Lord, and ministering in his presence, have more of the divine nature communicated unto us.

[5.] There is the unanimous conjunction of all the saints in the praises of God, or a joining in comfort, without jarring or difference. The apostle biddeth us, Rom. xv. 6, 'With one mind and with one mouth to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is our duty, but never performed to the full, but when we meet together in that great *πανάγωγη*, that council of souls, or 'the general assembly and church of the first-born,' which the apostle describeth, Heb. xii. 23, 'The spirits of just men made perfect,' or consecrated. It is comfortable to join in worship with the people of God now. Moses preferred it, with afflictions, before all the riches, and honours, and pleasures he enjoyed in Egypt: Heb. xi. 24, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'



But then is the communion of saints completed, when all are admitted to the vision and clearest knowledge of God, and have the most perfect adherence and love to him. Now what an happy time will that be, when we and all the holy ones of God shall, with the same enlarged affection, set about the same work! as our groans here made but one sound, and our conjoined tears but one stream, and our united desires but one prayer, so all our praises then shall make but one melody and harmony. If it be an happiness to live with the saints in their imperfection, when sin doth often embitter their society, surely it is an happiness to live with them for ever when they are purged and freed from sin, and fully consecrated and fitted to minister before the Lord.

[6.] To think of God, and to rejoice in his glory, and to love and praise him, will be our great employment. There we shall be intent upon our choice and noble work, which is praising and lauding God: Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they are still praising thee.' Praises now are a part of our sacrifices, and must be mingled with our prayers: Phil. iv. 6, 'In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God.' So Rev. v. 8, 'The four beasts and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.' Harps signify their praises and thanksgivings. Here it cometh in by way of mixture, but there it is our sole employment. There is no need of prayers, for there are no sins, nor wants, nor necessities there; all is praise. David calleth upon the angels 'to bless the Lord,' Ps. ciii. 20, to tell us what they do. And when a multitude of them descended at Christ's birth, Luke ii. 13, 14, they presently fell a-lauding and praising God, 'Glory be to God in the highest.' It is the opinion of the ancient Hebrews that every day they sing praises to God, and that in the morning; this they gather from Gen. xxxii. 6, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh;' which place the Targum of Jerusalem thus explaineth, 'Let me go, for the pillar of the morning ascends; and behold, the hour approacheth that the angels are to sing.' This was their opinion. Sure we are that the angels bless God, and that in an eminent manner, as appeareth by frequent passages of scripture, where they are called upon to bless the Lord; for though the speech be in the imperative mood, as if it were hortatory, yet it is to be expounded by the indicative, as narrative of what the angels do. Particularly we read they blessed God for his own excellence: Isa. vi. 1-3, 'In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.' For the creation: Job xxxviii. 4-7, 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof, when the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?' For the nativity of Christ:

Luke ii. 13, 14, 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men.' So they blessed Christ: Rev. v. 11, 12, 'I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Though they cannot fully comprehend God, yet they do it far more clearly than we. They apprehend God's excellency and perfection in himself; they know also the excellency of his works, creation, and providence, and the redemption of mankind. 'Then we shall know as we are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12, and understand the faithfulness of God's conduct in bringing us to glory. O blessed time when we shall fall upon the work of angels, when we shall have a sublime understanding to know God, an heart to love him, and a mouth to praise him for evermore! We shall not need any excitement, but be willing and ready to do it. We have greater cause of blessing God than the angels have. It is a question whether an innocent or a penitent person is more bound to thank God? An innocent man is bound to praise God in respect of the greatness of the benefit, and the continuance of it; but a penitent man in respect of the freeness and graciousness of it. The freeness and graciousness is much more conspicuous towards men. God was indeed good and bountiful to the angels, creating them out of nothing, endowing them with many excellent gifts; but to man sinful was God good indeed; he loved us as enemies; when his justice, offended by sin, put a bar to our salvation, he spared not his beloved Son, but delivered him to a cursed death in our room and stead.

2. To exhort us to prepare ourselves for this estate; and let us labour that we may be such as may be counted meet to minister before the Lord in his heavenly temple. To this end—

[1.] Let us hasten the acts which belong to our consecration, and attend upon them with more seriousness, which is the cleansing of the soul from the guilt and stain of sin. From the guilt of sin: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Comfortable access to God here in the world depends upon our justification; the more clear that is, the more we are fitted to come before the Lord. From the stain of sin: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Though all see enough of God to satisfaction, these see more than others do. Therefore the more we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, the more of God shall we see, and the sooner shall we be admitted into his blessed presence. It was an old observation, even among the heathens, *ὃν φιλεῖ Θεὸς ἀποθνήσκει νεὸς*, that he whom God loveth dieth young. Not that all that die young are beloved of God; but ordinary observation will teach you this, that let a man more than ordinarily improve in purity of heart, though God may lend him to the world for an example for some time, yet they are taken to God sooner than others; or if they are



continued in the world, they are continued under more weaknesses, and do with more earnestness expect their translation to the everlasting priesthood.

[2.] Let us begin our sacrifices, and discharge our priestly office now, and perform all the duties which belong to our ministration with more fidelity. Some of our duties are proper only to the present state, as consecrating ourselves to God, and using ourselves for God; that is out of date then, for our consecration is over before we come there. It is undeniable that the blessed spirits all live to God: Luke xx. 38, 'He is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him.' But there is no need of giving up ourselves to God, for then we possess God. Mercy is useless in an estate where misery cannot approach; therefore now it must be exercised. None are priests in heaven but those that have acted the priest's part upon earth. But praise holds good now, and then too: Ps. cvii. 22, 'Let us sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.' This is to tune our instruments, and to be fitting ourselves for our everlasting work.

[3.] Let us be more frequent and often with God; for the throne of grace is the very porch of heaven; by it we pass to the throne of glory. Surely that life upon earth is best which is likeliest to the life of heaven: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' Prayer giveth us the nearest familiarity which a man in flesh can have with God, and is the best preparation for our entrance upon our everlasting priesthood. A man acquainted with a God beforehand is not to seek for a God to pray to when he cometh to die, nor for a mediator to intercede for him, nor for a spirit of adoption to fly to God as a reconciled Father. Having been frequently entertained and accepted by God, he can the better resign his spirit into his hands, and with more confidence wait for this nearer attendance. Alas! to go out of the world into unknown and unseen regions, where we are wholly strangers, how sad is that! Who will venture into the ocean who hath not learned to swim in the shallow brooks and streams? Communion with God in a way of grace is the way to communion with him in a way of glory. We go to see him face to face whom we have seen by the eye of faith, to live with him in heaven with whom we have lived upon earth. *Species non letificat in patria, quem fides non consolatur in via*—Sight will not be joyful to him in heaven whom faith hath not comforted upon earth. He that hath often heard and accepted us will not reject us.

3. Let us be more apprehensive of the greatness of the privilege of drawing nigh to God, that we may improve it accordingly. The priests were sanctified to draw nearer to God than the common people, and employed in his holy service. Yea, nearness of ministration before the Lord is the felicity of the glorified. How must we improve it?

[1.] Partly to be ashamed of our loathness to draw nigh to God, and our weariness of his special service. Oh, let us not shun God as an enemy, and be loath to come into his special presence, or backward to converse with him.

[2.] To thankfulness to our Redeemer. It was purchased by the blood of Jesus: Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to

enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' We may be the more confident of drawing nigh to him in a way of grace, for he hath purchased also our entrance into glory: Eph iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him.'

*Use 3. Comfort.*

1. Against present weaknesses in duty. There will be a time when we shall more perfectly express our thanksgiving to God.

2. Against troubles and sufferings. It must be so now, that we may be conformed to our head; but no molestation should be an impediment in our work.

3. Against death. It should make us willing to die, that we may minister before the Lord. If David so longed for the enjoyment of God in the earthly temple: Ps. lxi. 1, 2, 'O God! thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;' how much more cause have we to long for the time when we shall be made priests to him for ever?

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# SERMONS UPON LEVITICUS XIX. 17.

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## SERMON I.

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*—LEV. xix. 17.

I AM to speak to you at this time concerning christian and brotherly reproof. Our first care should be that we are not sinners ourselves ; our next, that we partake not of the sins of others ; which may not only be by counselling and abetting their evil actions, but also by a faulty connivance and silence, when the glory of God and love to our neighbours' souls do loudly call upon us to mind them of their duty and warn them of their danger. To this end I have made choice of this scripture, 'Thou shalt not hate,' &c. Where take notice—

1. Of the removal of the impediment, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.'

2. An earnest excitement of the duty of reproof, 'Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.'

3. A reason to enforce it, 'Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him,' or that thou bear not sin for him.

*First*, A removal of the impediment or hindrance, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.' Hatred is forbidden when rebuke or reproof is prescribed, for two reasons—

1. Because there is a supposition of wrong done ; that is, when any man hath wronged us in anything, let him not nourish hatred or anger in his bosom, lest by abiding there long, it soureth into malice and revenge ; rather go and show them the evil that they have done, to bring them to repentance. It is said of Absalom, 2 Sam. xiii. 22, that 'Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.' Amnon did the wrong, but Absalom reproved him not, because he hated him. Implacable malice and desire of revenge is hid under silence and dissimulation : 'He spake neither good nor bad to Amnon,' to wit, of that subject of the rape committed upon his sister ; he reproved not the fact, that so he might conceal his malice, till he found occasion to put the same in execution ; and this is the fashion of all that regard the wrong done to themselves, but not the offence done to God. Well, then, since hatred begets close and cunning dissimulation, till it have a full advantage to put forth itself, it is opposite to reproof ; it is as fire

raked under ashes, and reserved till another day. The historian Tacitus observeth it in Tiberius, who being offended by some words spoken in the senate by Haterius and Scaurus, *In Haterium statim invectus, Scaurum cui implacabilis irascebatur, silentio transmittit*—The one he rebuked, the other, whom he implacably hated, he passed by with silence. Therefore God, well knowing the disposition of man, giveth this direction by his servant Moses, ‘Hate not thy brother in thy heart, but rebuke him in any wise.’ So that you see it is meant of hatred, rising of offences principally; wherefore rebuke him, hate him not for such things. Suitable to this is the law of Christ: Luke xvii. 3, ‘Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.’ Do your utmost to reduce any that offendeth, though it be by injuring thee; do not desire revenge, but seek an opportunity to pardon him upon his reformation: Mat. xviii. 15, ‘If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother;’ that is, thy charity must be sure to put off all thoughts of revenge against him; yea, it will oblige thee to use all prudent methods to bring him to a sense of his fault, and the most discreet and gentle ways are first to be essayed. That is the first reason.

2. He that doth not rebuke his brother when he doth anything amiss doth indeed hate him, not love him. There are two things which put us upon reproof—zeal for God’s glory, and love to our neighbour’s soul. There is a defect in our zeal if we do not seek to repair God’s honour when it is wounded by others: Ps. lxxix. 9, ‘The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.’ Injuries done to God and religion affect us no less nearly than personal wrongs done to ourselves. So there is a defect in our love and charity to others to let them alone in soul-dangers; and therefore reproof, as it is opposed to hatred, so it is opposed also to flattery, which is false and corrupt love: Prov. xxviii. 23, ‘He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.’ When we are about to reprove others for their faults, we are afraid we shall offend them, and that all friendship will be broken off between us and them, and so are tempted to connive at others’ sinful courses for fear of a rupture and breach with them. Alas! at length, though the party be displeased a little for the present, when he recovereth and cometh to himself again, he will see that you showed him the true friendship, whereas others that connived at or flattered him in his sins, however they sought to please his humour, hated his soul; and they will love you the better for it, because you awaken them out of their sins, that would have been their eternal ruin. It is possible you may enrage a wicked and haughty scorner, but then you have discharged your duty, and freed your own soul. But for others, you get the more favour and thanks, because you have done a true office of love. So that that which you are afraid will be an occasion of breaking off friendship, will prove a means to nourish love: Prov. ix. 8, ‘Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.’ Gain him to a sense of his duty, and he will bless God for thee while he hath a day to live. So Prov. xxvii. 5, 6, ‘Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful



are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' Open rebuke is when we plainly, and sometimes sharply, convince men of their errors or sins they lie in; this is better than hidden love, for that is of no use and profit to us. He that reduceth me into the way when I go astray, and plucketh me out of the fire and water when I am in danger to be drowned or burned, though he break an arm or leg; he that cureth my disease, though by a sharp and troublesome medicine, doth me a greater benefit than he that professeth great love to me, and lets me alone to perish, and will not reach an hand to pluck me out, out of tenderness, as loath to trouble me. That is called hidden love that doth not make itself known by the offices of love and friendship, or for fear of offence will not warn a man of his danger; it is indeed true hatred. The next verse is to the same purpose. It may be my friend wounds me, as the physician lets me bleed to cure my fever; he doth it in faithfulness. A sharp reproof is there called 'a wound,' but it is the faithfulness of my friend, not done out of rancour or malice, with a desire to shame and reproach me; it is intended for my good; but 'the kisses of an enemy,' or one that hateth me and my soul, 'are deceitful.' By 'kisses' are meant the pretences of great love to us, as Joab kissed Amasa, and stabbed him, 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10; and Judas kissed Christ, and betrayed him, Mat. xxvi. 48, 49. Alas! this love is but deceitful, whilst it betrayeth your souls. That this is true love appeareth also, because thus God dealeth himself with his own children: Prov. iii. 12, 'For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.' God loveth his children dearly, but yet will not let them perish in their sins, therefore sometimes he useth a smart discipline towards them. Satan seeketh to lull them asleep by the delights of the flesh, but God awakeneth them by the sharp corrections and rebukes of his providence. I will but add David's expression, which sheweth what thoughts he had of a sharp reproof wisely administered: Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.' David, perceiving what mischief those unhappy flatterers that Saul had about him had procured to him, beggeth of God as a great blessing that he might have such godly and faithful friends about him as would never consent to any wrong deed of his, and would not only dissent, but dissuade him from it, yea, reprove him, and rebuke him sharply, if need were; which sort of friendly smiting would be a most acceptable good turn as could be performed to him. Surely he that truly hateth sin loveth to be freely dealt withal, and reproved and admonished of it. It may be the reproof is as a wound to the flesh, which is proud and impatient of contradiction; but it is the fruit of love unfeigned; and when we are in our right wits, it should be as a precious oil, which they were wont to pour on the head, both for health, and cheering, and gladness.

*Secondly*, The exhortation itself, 'Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.' Here is—(1.) The object; (2.) The act.

1. The object, thy neighbour and brother. Here the question will be the same that was put to Christ: Luke x. 29, 'Who is my neighbour?' Christ answereth him by a parable, and sheweth him that every one that stood in need of his charity, he is the object of thy

compassion and mercy. So in this piece of charity, by 'brother' and 'neighbour' is meant any other man, though he be to thee as a Jew to a Samaritan, upon terms of the greatest separation and hostility towards thee. So our Lord teacheth elsewhere: Mat. v. 43, 44, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.' Offices of love must be extended to all, even to aliens and enemies; therefore for this case am I to reprove an infidel or one of a false religion?

We answer briefly, as the apostle, Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.'

[1.] By the law of charity I owe this office of love to all, for I should bring home as many to God as possibly I can. Neither age, nor sex, nor any condition of life doth deprive them of the benefit, nor exempt me from my duty to them. Unbelievers are our neighbours, and to be loved with a true love; besides *φιλαδελφία*, 'Love of the brethren,' *ἀγάπη*, 'love' is required of christians: 2 Peter i. 7, 'Add to brotherly-kindness charity.' And therefore they must not be excluded from the common act and office of charity that belongeth to all men as men. Spiritual alms is no more restrained than bodily. Now upon occasion we are bound to relieve the worst in their great necessity, and none have such great necessity of being reduced as infidels, for they are further from God and more gone astray than others, and therefore most need information and warning of the danger they are in. An unbeliever may reprove a believer; so on the contrary: Gen. xx. 16, 'And Abimelech said unto Sarah, Behold, I have given to thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee, and with all other: thus was she reprov'd.' This heathen king reprov'd her, because she wore not a veil, as wives are wont to do, but dissembled, and thereby she was in danger of being ensnared, and giving occasion of these mischiefs; as if he should say, Acknowledge freely hereafter that he is thy husband, and cover thy face in token that thou art a married woman, and that consequently he is the shield and defence of thy chastity; let it be a lesson and warning to thee to be more circumspect hereafter.

[2.] This is chiefly to be done to christians, and those who are members of the same church, for in a chief respect they are to be reckoned brother and neighbour. They have a nearer brotherly conjunction with us than others, and the precept of brotherly correction introduceth that discipline which is to be used in the church for ever: Mat. xviii. 15-17, 'Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;' that is, thy fellow christian, he is first to be admonished privately, without putting him to any shame or reproach, and if he mend upon such admonition,



there is an end. It is comfort enough to you to be an happy instrument of his repentance. But if that first method succeed not, other courses must be taken; and the case is to be brought before the christian church, ver. 17, that it receive no damage by wilful and obstinate offenders; so that reproof doth mostly concern the scandalous sins of a brother or professed believer.

[3.] Among christians, some are more nearly related to us, either by the bonds of natural kindred or special friendship, as those of our family, and with whom we have familiar converse. We know not the estate of those who are at a distance, but those within the sphere of our commerce we are more particularly concerned in; as the apostle says as to corporal relief: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' They act quite contrary to the laws of Christ. So here, they that are of the same family, we are bound in a special manner to seek their good and welfare, because, besides the common bond of christian charity, there is a special tie of kindred and relation, and also because this nearness and relation giveth an opportunity of frequent commerce, and opportunity is one of the talents which we are to account for.

2. The act is rebuking or reproof him for sin, which must be done faithfully, compassionately, and prudently.

[1.] Faithfully; for in the Hebrew it is 'in rebuking thou shalt rebuke;' that is, freely, plainly, soundly reprove him; for doubling of the words in the Hebrew increaseth the sense. We render it, 'Thou shalt in any wise rebuke.' We must sometimes, ἐλέγχειν ἀποτόμως. So Titus i. 13, 'Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.' But the end and circumstances must govern the matter, for corrosives are not proper to all wounds and diseases, and a proud censure is not a charitable reproof. Therefore in the general it must be so as it may best obtain its effect.

[2.] With lenity and christian meekness, that it may appear an act of love; not the fruit of passion, but compassion: Gal. vi. 1, 'If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' When we would reclaim and restore such as are surprised with any sin, we must do it in such a manner that they may see our love to them, and that we have a right aim, which is not the reproach and disgrace of the person, but his reformation and amendment. Our indignation against the sin must not transport us, or carry us besides our pity to the person; and there must not appear in it the rigour and severity of censure which proceedeth of pride, but the lenity of love, considering the circumstance of human frailty, and our own proneness to offend if we were in like circumstances. It is our brother's amendment we look after, not to beget in others an ill opinion of him, or a good opinion of ourselves, as if we were singular in holiness and hatred of sin above others; and we must by all means show that our reproof proceedeth from a zeal for the glory of God, and love to and care of the salvation of our neighbour.

[3.] Prudently. All circumstances must be well weighed, of person, time, and place, occasion, and the temptations to the offence, that all things may be done conveniently, and proportionable to the end: Prov.

xxv. 12, 'As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear;' that is, wise reproof is a precious jewel, that is not so great an ornament to the ear as a wise seasonable reproof is acceptable to a gracious heart. Reproof is an ear-jewel; now an ear-jewel must not be too weighty and heavy, lest it tear and rend, rather than adorn the ear.

*Thirdly*, The argument by which this duty is enforced, 'Lest thou bear sin for him;' that is the marginal reading; in the text, 'Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him;' either reading affordeth a strong argument.

1. 'Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him;' that is, not leave him in his sin unreproved. Sin should be so odious to a gracious heart, that, as we should be careful not to commit it ourselves, so we should not permit it to lie upon others. As we would shake off a spark of fire from their clothes, so we must not suffer any sinful blemish to remain upon their consciences and conversations. God would every way hedge us within our duty; as by mourning for the sins of others he teacheth us penitence for our own, so by reproofing others' sins he teacheth us caution for ourselves: Rom. ii. 1, 'Thou art inexcusable, O man, who-soever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.' They that live and go on in these sins, in judging others they condemn themselves.

2. The other reading also offereth a good argument, 'That thou bear not sin for him.' To bear sin is to bear punishment; as Christ is said to 'bear our sins in his body upon the tree,' when he endured the punishment due to our sins, 1 Peter ii. 24. So he that reproveth not sin is said to bear sin for his brother or neighbour, that is, punishment for his sake, because he seeketh not to save a soul from death; as the Lord threateneth, Ezek. iii. 18, 'When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hands.' Others are to answer for it, who have ability and opportunity to reprove. Now we have sins enough of our own, that we need not take on us a new guilt, and be partakers of other men's sins, or bear more for their sakes.

From the whole observe—

*Doct.* That brotherly reproof is a necessary duty, which all are bound to practise as well as they can.

I. Let us consider the kind of the duty which we are bound to enforce. Reproof and admonition is either authoritative and by way of office, or charitable and by way of general duty.

1. For reproof by way of office we have many scriptures: 2 Tim. iv. 2, 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine;' that is, urge them, press them, call upon them when they are at leisure to hear, and come together for that purpose; or when thou hast any opportunity to fasten anything upon them at other times. Labour still to convince the evil-doers of their wicked courses. This is the continual duty of ministers, and they must mind it *ἐνκάριως, ἀκάριως*, 'in



season, out of season ; both when they have probable opportunities, and when they take occasion, though they find it not ; when the hearers, it may be, think it not so seasonable : the recovery of souls must not be delayed.

2. Reproof by way of general duty, which lieth upon all men that are capable, and have the use of reason. Of this the apostle speaketh, 1 Thes. v. 14, 'Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men.' All these are duties of christian charity, which belong to private believers : *νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους*, 'Warn them that are unruly.' Reproof is one of these duties : 2 Thes. iii. 15, 'Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother,' *νουθετεῖτε* ; set his duty in his mind. Again, all christians must contribute their help to preserve the church of Christ from scandal and prejudice ; and therefore, when they see any man forsake his station and his work, they must admonish him of his fault, and never leave till they have reduced him into his proper posture and place again. Now there is a difference between these two duties ; for the one is not only an act of charity, but justice ; the other is an act of charity, and that general duty that we owe to a neighbour as a neighbour. The one is done by a superior, by virtue of his office ; the other is done by an equal towards his equal, or by a superior by virtue of his common relation. The one is done publicly by right dividing the word of truth, and giving every one his portion ; the other is done privately between us and our brother, that we may gain him according to Christ's rule. The one is done by public declaration, and the evidence of truth in their consciences, disapproving their evil deeds : John iii. 20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The other is done by closer application, or personal charge for the sins that we have heard and seen : Gal. ii. 11, 'When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.' The one requireth aptness of gifts, the other only christian prudence and a fervent charity. This latter we have now in hand.

II. The arguments by which we are to enforce it ; which are needful in this case, because men are so apt to bear with sin, both in themselves and others ; and this duty is of so great use, that Satan seeketh to hinder it with all his power ; and so hard to be done rightly, that most men quite omit it.

1. I shall prove it from the law of nature, which teacheth me to love my neighbour as myself ; and therefore conscience bindeth me to reduce those into the right way who are gone out of it ; this is the obliging internal cause. We ourselves by a regular will, having erred, would be glad to be reduced, and set into the right way again : Jer. viii. 4, 'Thus saith the Lord, Shall they fall, and not arise ? shall they turn away, and not return ?' Is any man so absurd, heedless, and witless, that when he hath gotten a fall, will lie still, and not essay to get up again ? or that hath been unwittingly out of the way, and will not desire to come into it again, and be willing to receive direction from those that would set him right ? Now this being a dictate of nature, produced by God himself by his prophet, to aggravate their apostasy, who having fallen by their sin, refused to rise and return, holdeth good

also to others, whom we are to love as ourselves. And therefore, when they are fallen, we must help them to rise again; and when they are turned away, we must help them to return. This is so natural, that the very birds and beasts desire to return to their proper places in their natural and appointed time when they have wandered; as the prophet speaketh of the stork, turtle, and crane: ver. 7, 'Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming.' Now, from that reciprocal obligation that is between men and the law of nature, we are bound to reprove our brother; as we desire it, and expect it from them, to be set right when we are wrong, we are to pay the same debt of love to them again. The argument holdeth *a fortiori*, because in spiritual things the danger is greater, the good to be procured is greater, the evil to be feared greater. Yea, this argument is the stronger, because it holdeth good concerning the ox and ass; not only of our own neighbour, but of our enemy; as Exod. xxiii. 4, 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again;' and Deut. xxii. 1, 'Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox, or his sheep, go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again to thy brother.' Surely hereby God would teach every man not to look on his own things only, but to love and do good to other men. This duty required towards beasts is much more towards men: Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 'Ye have not brought again that which was driven away, and ye have not sought that which was lost.' We are all like sheep going astray, and have need of one another's help. Mark, there are two precepts in Deut. xxii. 1—a prohibition, not to hide, and a commandment, to restore; so that they are doubly guilty that are not affected with other men's sins, or do not seek to reform them.

2. It is a duty because positively commanded by God; so that unless we will be guilty of flat disobedience, we ought to mind it. God bindeth all men to reprove their erring brother and neighbour, keeping the rules of prudence, justice, and charity. Now that God hath commanded this, many of the scriptures cited before prove: Mat. xviii. 15, 'If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee;' which is to be understood not only of offences done to us, but to be extended to all wilful crimes of which we see him guilty; for zeal for God should prevail with us as much as injuries done to ourselves; and it is not angry reproach, but christian admonition that we press you to: 1 Thes. v. 14, 'Warn them that are unruly;' 2 Thes. iii. 15, 'Admonish him as a brother.' So Rom. xv. 14, 'I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another.' So Prov. xxv. 8-10, 'Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not a secret to another, lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.' All these expressions concern brotherly reproof, debating matters in case of offence and injury real or supposed. If we presently run to law, without using previous gentle methods of taking up matters among ourselves, we run a great hazard, both of loss and infamy. Better end it by friendly composition than running to the judge, where, by many un-



happy representations, a righteous cause may be oppressed. But for the common duty of christians, see Eph. v. 11, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' The word *μᾶλλον* 'rather,' doth not lessen our duty, but enforce it. *Ἐλέγχειν δεῖ*, saith Chrysostom, we ought to reprove. We shall not be excused before God unless we do our duty. So Jude 22, 23, 'And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.'

## SERMON II.

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him—LEV. xix. 17.*

THIRDLY, Consider how far it bindeth.

[1.] Intensively, as to the value of the precept. It is not an arbitrary direction, which we may omit or observe at pleasure, but a necessary precept, which we must obey.

(1.) From the danger we incur. We are under danger of sin, and bearing punishment for them whom we reprove not; and the punishment of sin is eternal death, if it be omitted out of a culpable negligence. Eternal life and eternal death is in the case; there is no doubt of superiors, who by justice and office are bound to reprove, as well as by the law of common love and charity: Ezek. xxxiii. 6, 'His blood will I require at the watchman's hands.' But even private persons may bear sin for others.

(2.) Because of the good which cometh thereby, which is the glory of God and the gaining of our brother: Mat. xviii. 15, 'Thou hast gained thy brother.' And the gaining of another's soul is no small advantage; this will be your crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord. To enforce both, consider that text, Prov. xxiv. 11, 12, 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?' Here is a work of charity, delivering the innocent from temporal death. The sin is a sin of omission; every man is bound to do what he can to save his neighbour from imminent destruction. It is our duty not to be silent and see him perish; with a safe conscience we cannot do so; it is against the light of nature and all honesty to use tergiversation in this case, when we have probability to help it; and will not this hold good in the case of brotherly reproof, when thou seest thy neighbour likely to perish, and be undone for ever? The same charity that bindeth us to deliver him from temporal death will much more bind us to deliver him from eternal death: Heb. iii. 12, 13, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Not only in you your-

selves, but 'in any of you,' as will be clear in the remedy prescribed : 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' This is a work of christian charity, which we owe to one another as christian brethren. But see how God answereth the excuse, 'If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not.' They knew not the danger or innocency of the person. Can you answer so to God? 'Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider?' &c. He will be judge whether you love your brother, yea or no? whether this pretence be cowardice or mere ignorance?

[2.] How far the obligation reacheth extensively. It bindeth all ; for all are to be able : Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another ;' and Rom. xv. 14, 'I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' There are several relations between christians, but all are bound to reprove. Some are superiors, some are inferiors ; superiors are bound in point of justice ; inferiors in point of charity. Superiors that have charge of souls are much more bound to reprove than others ; God's threatenings against them are more grievous if they neglect this duty of love. The watchman must not spare. Yea, they are bound though it be with the danger of their lives ; as Mat. x. 16, 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' John the Baptist reprov'd Herod, though it cost him his life, Mark vi. 27. And the reason is, they have a double tie and bond upon them, as their office and relation, besides the common bond of charity.

But now whether inferiors are bound to reprove those that are over them?

Yes, certainly ; for David, a king, did receive with meekness a reproof not only from Nathan, a prophet, but from Abigail, a woman, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33 ; and Job produceth it as a proof of his integrity that he despised not the cause of his man-servant, or of his maid-servant, when they contended with him, Job xxxi. 13. Certainly we owe this duty to superiors, as their danger is greater. To save a private person is not so much as to do good to one that shineth in a higher sphere. Well, then, we are bound to reprove all whom we are bound to love, whether superiors or inferiors. But then to superiors we are to use great modesty : 1 Tim. v. 1, 'Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren.' It should be rather an exhortation and entreaty than a reproof. So princes and magistrates, who are subject to errors and miscarriages, may with humility and wisdom be admonished ; as Naaman's servant : 2 Kings v. 13, 'My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith, Wash and be clean?' Dan. iv. 27, 'Wherefore O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee ;' and Col. iv. 17, 'Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.'

But yet this is still a generality. If every one be bound to reprove all, and all every one, when shall we know that this duty is to be put in act?



*Ans.* The admonisher should have a calling to it through some relation between him and the offender. So we may find it in all kind of relations; a minister or prophet, as Nathan reproved David, 2 Sam. xii. 1; as a counsellor, Joab reproveth him: 2 Sam. xix. 5, 6, 'Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which have saved thy life;' a yoke-fellow, as the husband the wife: Job ii. 10, 'Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.' The wife the husband, as Abigail to Nabal: 1 Sam. xxv. 37, 'And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of his head, and his wife had told him these things, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.' A son, as Jonathan to Saul: 1 Sam. xix. 4, 'And Jonathan spake good of David to Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee;' a servant admonisheth a prince, 2 Kings v. 13; a subject, so Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 27; a friend to his friend: Prov. xxvii. 6, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend.' Yea, a stranger travelling by the way, and seeing his fellow-traveller sin, or sitting at the same table, it is a call, because he is then in his company, and there is the sin committed; for so Christ proveth the Samaritan was a neighbour to the Jew, when he lighted upon him, Luke x. 29. So that the duty, though it universally obligeth, yet it is not unpracticable; there is something giveth us the occasion.

4. It is recommended. When, besides the precept, there is a commendation, it sheweth the value of a duty. Now God not only commandeth, but commendeth to us both the giving and taking a reproof, and that upon the highest and most pressing motives.

[1.] Let us see how the giving a reproof is recommended to us as a means to increase knowledge: Prov. xix. 25, 'Reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge;' that is, profit in the fear of the Lord. Yea, as a means to convey life: Prov. vi. 23, 'And reproofs of instruction are the way of life.' They are a means to reduce men to God and eternal happiness; and it is called saving a soul from death: James v. 19, 20, 'Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' So Prov. xxiv. 25, 'But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon him;' that is, all will pray for him, whereas they curse and detest flatterers. Many such promises there are.

[2.] Taking a reproof is commended: Eccles. vii. 5, 'It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.' It saddens the heart for the present, yet it is more wholesome and beneficial than vain mirth, that puts us off from seriousness in soul-dangers, and feedeth our lusts and corruptions. So Prov. xiii. 18, 'Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.' A headstrong wicked man bringeth himself to beggary and shame, but he that taketh counsel betimes soon wipeth off the stain of his miscarriages. So see two proverbs together: Prov. xv. 31, 32, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise: he that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul; but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.'

The one is a slight careless person, that despiseth God and his salvation ; but the other giveth a token of a wise and tractable disposition. So Prov. xvii. 10, 'A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.' Correction doth more good than correction. Now when God doth argue and persuade, and not only interpose his authority, surely this is a duty of importance, which we should make conscience of.

5. If God hath given directions about it, it is unquestionably a duty belonging to us ; for directions suppose the duty, and show that God would not have it miscarry in our hands. As when God directeth to pray, he supposeth prayer ; when God directeth to hear, he supposeth hearing ; so when he directeth to reprove, he supposeth reproof to be a duty. Now the word of God doth everywhere abound with these directions : as with what lenity and meekness we should reprove : 2 Cor. ii. 4, 'For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears ; not that you should be grieved, but that you may know the love which I have more abundantly unto you ;' Gal. vi. 1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' What difference we should make of faults. Gnats and camels : Mat. xxiii. 24, 'Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.' Of persons : Jude 22, 23, 'And of some have compassion, making a difference ; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.'

6. The duty is necessary to prevent a sin, such as detraction, censure, and backbiting. It is the usual fashion of the world to change a duty into a sin ; it should be the care of God's people to change a sin into a duty : Eph. v. 4, 'Not foolish talking or jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.' So do not speak of them that sin, but to them ; do not judge, but reprove.

7. That without which no society can be maintained, no relation faithfully improved, certainly is an unquestionable duty ; but so is reproof. No society can be maintained, for faults will arise, the injured will vent themselves in passion or reproof ; now which conduceth to the welfare of human society ? And for relations, how can I be faithful to God in them unless I take advantage of this nearness and frequency of converse for spiritual use ? Even good men will miscarry : if we be privy to it, must we hold our peace ? Well, then, observe the reasonableness of God's ordinance.

III. What is reproof ? It is an act of charity or mercy, by which we seek by fit discourse to draw our brother from sin to his duty.

1. It is an act of charity and mercy, not of pride and vainglory : James iii. 1, 'My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.' No ; it is not an act of mastery or rash judging, but of mercy towards our brother in his spiritual misery, as he hath rendered himself obnoxious to God's wrath.

2. The means it useth is fit discourse, not correction and chastening, but correction or rebuke. It must be dispensed in most wholesome ways, such as may be most fit to gain a sinner and heal his soul. To some we must use more tenderness, but more sharpness to others. In general, we reprove from God's word : Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of



Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another ;' that the offender may see God reproving him rather than man ; as Christ reproved the pharisees with mere words of scripture : Mat. xv. 7-9, ' Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me : but in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' The reproof must be insinuated as the matter requireth, either by exhortation, admonition, or caution.

3. The end, not to shame him, but to gain him from sin to his duty. If the man be good, to set him in joint again : Gal. vi. 1, ' Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' If carnal, to take this occasion to turn him from sin to holiness, or to save his soul from death : James v. 19, 20, ' Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

IV. Let us see when this duty bindeth or bindeth not ; for it being an affirmative precept, it doth not bind at all times, but as circumstances. Affirmative precepts, *non ligant ad semper*, do not always bind, as negative precepts do, for evil actions are never lawful. Affirmative precepts bind only when time and place and other circumstances concur ; and then the omission is faulty.

The question then is, at what times and in what circumstances this duty bindeth ?

1. It bindeth not if I do not certainly or probably know the sin of my neighbour ; for reproof by way of charge must be upon an apparent crime ; as Gal. ii. 11, ' But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed ;' 1 Cor. v. 1, ' It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles ; that one should have his father's wife,' 1 Cor. i. 11, ' For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.' Mark the grounds ; he goeth upon certain knowledge, public fame, and valuable testimony : ' It is commonly reported,' and ' it is declared by the house of Chloe.' Faults that we reprove must be certainly known and evident ; we may not reprove upon bare suspicion, for ' charity thinketh no evil,' 1 Cor. xiii. 5 ; nor upon an uncertain hearsay : Isa. xi. 3, ' Neither reprove after the hearing of his ears ;' not upon flying report, or forged stories, or the censures of any.

But here we must distinguish between the reproof of a public and private person and a bosom friend.

[1.] Mere private persons are not bound to use inquisition themselves, nor are they to be too suspicious, and credulously give ear to slanders. If private persons were bound to search and find out faults that they may reprove them, the obligation were intolerable, the number of sinners being so innumerable as they are, and a man could hardly avoid the imputation of a busybody and whisperer. Therefore it is a good rule of Austin, Do not seek out what thou mayest reprove, but

seek to mend what thou dost reprove. Therefore private men are not bound to search and find out faults. The knowledge of another's sin is not *scientia juris*, which all are bound to have, but *scientia facti*, which none are bound to but those to whom the particular care of others' souls doth belong by office ; for *par in pares non habet imperium*—equals have no power over one another. The fault must be known either by certain knowledge or common fame, when you see your brother sinning.

[2.] A superior and bosom friend may go upon suspicion, but then his reproof must be rather by way of caution than charge, and by virtue of special friendship, that as no guilt, so no blame may rest upon his friend. A superior is to search out the matter.

2. Not if he hath repented already ; for to upbraid men with past sins is to rake in the filth which God hath covered. The elder brother said, Luke xv. 30, 'As soon as this thy son is come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.' There is a difference between the correction of a superior and the reproof of a neighbour. The correction of a magistrate respects the common good or the example of others ; and therefore, whether the man repent or no, he may be corrected and punished for his faults, and he must patiently endure the punishment ; but brotherly reproof respects the private good of the party admonished or reproved, to remove the fault, not to inflict punishment ; the end is obtained if thou hast gained thy brother.

But yet here is an exception ; if we have good cause to suspect his repentance is not thorough and sincere, or if he be in danger of a relapse into the sin again.

3. If it be evident he shall do no good by his reproof ; for all means are required in order to the end. Therefore when there is no appearance of doing good at all, or that our reproof will be profitable or attain its proper end, we are not bound in such a case. Ministerial reproof must be given though there be no hope : Ezek. ii. 5, 'And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are a rebellious house, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.' The waters of the sanctuary must flow, whether men drink of them or no. But in private reproof we are bound while there is hope, and while they are not incorrigible. Yet there is this exception ; every attempt must not discourage us, nor every reproach and scorn make us give over the cause as remediless ; but we must reprove, and reprove again, as long as we have any hopes of reducing them into the right way : 2 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore I will not be negligent,' saith the apostle Peter, 'to put you always in remembrance of these things.' Let us do our duty, and trust God with the event. Those that for the present do storm and rage may afterwards come to themselves again, especially if God stirreth us up by the secret motions of his Spirit to continue our endeavours : Acts xvii. 16, Paul's 'spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.' Impulse of spirit doth determine circumstances of known duty though it doth not constitute new duties.

4. When the party is likely to be the worse, rather than better, if he be reproved : Prov. ix. 7, 'He that reproveth a scorner getteth to him-



self shame, and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot,' if it provoketh them to rail. So Mat. vii. 6, 'Give not holy things to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' Some are so wedded to their sins, that God's providence calleth upon us to let them alone. No good statue can be made of crooked or knotty timber; a vicious stomach turneth all things into choler; rain maketh a spongy marsh ground the worse; blowing increaseth the fire; a dunghill stinketh the worse the more it is stirred. Some are contemptuous and scornful; their corruptions are irritated by seeking to restrain them. Therefore if he sinneth the more grievously, that is a worse inconveniency than the reproof can bring good. Yet we must take heed that we do not censure people to be such without a cause; the reasons for our omission of such a necessary duty must be clear and sure, such as we can urge and avouch before God himself. We must not put by the duty upon slight conjectures, but still remember that God seeth and will consider it. It is very notable that cautions against rash judging are given before the direction of not casting pearls before swine and dogs: Mat. vii. 1, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'

5. When it will be rationally presumed that he will amend without our reproof. As alms ought not to be given to one that is indeed in poverty, when we know there are those that will plentifully relieve him, so in the case of reproof, when neither by ourselves, nor by the help of any other, a man is likely to be awakened, then we are bound to reprove him, or procure another that may do it more successfully; for some are capable to manage it with more wisdom than ourselves. I confess this must be taken cautiously. A general presumption that another will do his office doth not absolve us *in foro conscientie*, because this duty ariseth not from any voluntary contract or paction between men and men, but from the law of God, our supreme governor and judge, binding every one; and therefore we must do our own duty, and not think to be discharged by the zeal and diligence of others. And besides, a presumption that others will do it may cause it wholly to fall to the ground; as, Luke x. 33, the good Samaritan had not been absolved from uncharitableness if he had presumed that the priest and Levite would relieve the distressed man, or, if not they, that some other of his countrymen that came that way, and were nearer to him by nation and blood, and more charitable than the former, that they would relieve him; but he neither minded the one nor the other, but performed his duty; he saw a miserable spectacle, one wounded with thieves, 'and he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him,' ver. 33, 34. So here. The papists indeed make this limitation, *Nisi probabiliter præsumatur aliunde nacturum, qui eum corripiat*—Except he probably presume that another will reprove him; but this presumption must be evident and rational, not probable only; and where I am privy to it, and know it, and procure it, and know how much better he is able to manage it than myself, then I am not to take it out of his hands, or when others are present whose gifts and office more oblige them to it.

6. When he doth expect a better opportunity, his omission is not

faulty for the present ; for all things must be gone about in their season : Eccles. iii. 7, ' There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ; ' and in another place, because ' to every man there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him,' Eccles. viii. 6-8. He speaketh of the misery men contract upon themselves by disproving public disorders, especially in great persons, princes, and potentates. Therefore certainly it concerneth us to take a fit season ; not when a man is drunk ; as Abigail told Nabal not a word when the wine was in his head, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37 ; not when they are in the heat of passion, for then they are not capable of discerning right and reason : James i. 20, ' For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God ; ' therefore opportunity and conveniency of circumstances must be considered and improved. Yet here is caution still ; we must not adjourn it too far. Life is short, and sin groweth : Heb. iii. 13, ' Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' And it must be done at length ; if we have long waited for a season, and cannot find it, we must make it, and break a rule of civil prudence rather than violate conscience ; for civilities must not prescribe to religion.

7. If it be uncertain whether that which you reprove for be a sin, as suppose some kind of games or sports, which are questionable, because usually they do hurt, engross time, and enchant the mind, and are as the *excelsa mundi*, the high places of the world, that have a strange blast and judgment of God upon them, though we cannot say that for the nature of them they are utterly unlawful. What shall we do in this case ? Many weak people are importunate to have others reproved for these things ; but if once we give way to this, it looketh like an itch of reproofing ; and if we reprove for doubtful matters, men fly from our reproof for what is clear and open. Yet we may hold an argument, and prudently debate things, and discourse about them ; but take heed you do not hinder yourselves in matters that are of more weighty importance.

8. When greater loss and damage may come to ourselves by the reproof than benefit to the reproved. It is out of question that he that can easily discharge this duty without any considerable inconveniency, and only forbears it out of sloth and pusillanimity, hath the greater sin if he doth it not ; for he standeth with God for a trifle. But now if a considerable damage shall redound to myself in discharging this duty, it is of weight in this matter. Our Lord saith, Mat. vii. 6, ' Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' As suppose there be a danger of your life, having to do with a contemptuous sinner ; if I carry my life in my hand, and put it to hazard, there must be many things considered in this case. But now in extreme cases, if our neighbour be in present danger of losing his soul, with the danger of my bodily life I am to do what I can to save his soul. The work is good ; the danger, depending upon a future event, is not absolutely certain ; God can preserve me. However, it is a part of much self-denial to venture all in God's hands.

9. Public reproof is sometimes, not always necessary. If the sin be public, either as committed in sight before all : 1 Tim. v. 20, ' Them



that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear ;' or as judged by a public judicatory ; or if an hidden sin tends to the damage of the community ; or a greater hurt follow upon it than the loss of my neighbour's fame ; or if the person have lost all right to fame, or to a good name (as some have forfeited it), I need not stand nicely upon their good name, but in such cases I am to reprove publicly. In other cases the reproof must be private ; and the rule is, Mat. xviii. 15, ' Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.'

*Use 1.* If we are to reprove others, let us take care that we be innocent ourselves, not culpable, but blameless. They that are faulty themselves cannot reprove others without blushing and great shame. Pull out the beam out of thine own eye. Physician, heal thyself : Mat. vii. 3-5, ' And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ? or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote out of thy brother's eye ;' Rom. ii. 21, ' Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost thou commit sacrilege ?' The Jews were tender of idolatry after they had smarted in the matter of the golden calf, yet all the latter prophets condemn them for sacrilege and robbing God of his due. If we are faulty ourselves, either in the same kind or worse, we spoil our reproof : Ps. cxli. 5, ' Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil.' They may admonish with the greater authority. Others are remotely bound, they nearly ; others not without special repentance and humility, acknowledging their own sins, and desiring they may not be examples to harden others. A sinner is not freed from the debt of love, but he is bound humbly to acknowledge his sin, and forsake it, that he may be fit to reprove others.

*Use 2.* If others be bound to reprove, certainly you are bound to take a reproof. Solomon brings in the wretched sinner, when his sin hath found him out, speaking thus, Prov. v. 12, 13, ' How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof ; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me !' These are the lamentations of one that is ready to perish in his sin. And Prov. x. 17, ' He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction ; but he that hateth reproof, erreth.' They wander far and wide, that hate to be brought into the right way : Prov. xii. 1, ' He that hateth reproof is brutish.' Why ? Because he despiseth the great help of mankind, and so is carried away with his base and impetuous desires, and will not hear reason to the contrary : Prov. xiii. 18, ' Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction ; but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured ;' as unwilling to go on in a wrong course after he seemeth to be engaged in it ; and he shall be honoured as one that is prudent : Prov. xv. 5, ' A fool despiseth his father's instruction ; but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.' He is wise at the second hand ; though not in his first choice, yet in rectifying his ill choice. Nay, Prov. xv. 10, ' Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way ; and he that hateth reproof shall die.' Better be corrected than die and perish for ever. God's reproofs and rebukes at the last day

will be very severe and amazing. And ver. 31, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise;' that is, forsaketh the ill company which misled him, and betaketh himself to better guides: Prov. xxix. 1, 'He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' Our case without repentance is desperate; for when we have hardened ourselves in an evil way, the Lord overtakes us with a sudden destruction.

*Use 3.* It exhorts us to set upon this duty. There is need of it; which will appear if we consider the infirmity of nature, that is to be restrained, a blind mind to be enlightened, a drowsy heart to be awakened, vehemency of passions to be curbed, and great allurements to sin to be withstood. Say not with Cain, Gen. iv. 9, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Thou art so; do it then with love, lest you do the work of an enemy under the vizard of a friend. No hatred or ill end must put you on this business; for when you rebuke sin with sin, you increase it. Again, there is need of it; for it will prevent many evils, as censuring and detraction, and speaking ill of others, and invasion of the ministry. This is one great evil that heretofore hath reigned among us. Many little prattlers, that had no gifts, set up for ministers. This itch would soon be cured if men would mind necessary duties, such as meditation (which is a preaching to themselves), family instruction, and brotherly reproof.

*Use 4.* Direction to perform this duty. Many graces are necessary hereunto, as zeal for God, love to our neighbour, and courage. Avoid pusillanimity, that you be not hindered by your fears, this is the way to prevail; and if you prevail not, you must mourn and pray; as Lot: 2 Peter ii. 8, 'For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds;' Jer. xiii. 17, 'But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears.'

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## SERMONS UPON 1 CORINTHIANS XV. 19.

### SERMON I.

*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*—1 COR. xv. 19.

IN the context the apostle is disputing for the truth of the resurrection. This way of reasoning is *deducendo ad absurdum*, by showing the absurdities that would follow upon the denial of it.

The first absurdity is mentioned, ver. 13, 'If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.' In all things he is a pattern to his people; if the head be risen, so shall the members also.

The second absurdity consequent upon that is mentioned, ver. 14-16, 'And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not: for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.' Whole christianity would be a forgery, and whatever was preached by the apostles, and believed by them, vain and frivolous, if Christ be not risen.

The third absurdity, ver. 17, 'And if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.' That the new covenant, and all their confidence about remission of sins upon repentance, would come to nothing.

The fourth absurdity, that those that had lost their lives for Christ would perish eternally, and would have nothing to recompense this loss: ver. 18, 'Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.'

The fifth absurdity is in the text; if all our hopes in Christ were terminated with this life, christians were the most wretched sort of men in this world: 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' But these are such absurd thoughts, that every christian should abhor them with indignation.

In the words we have—

1. A supposition, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ.'

2. An absurdity thence inferred, 'We are of all men most miserable.'

*Doct.* That the calamities of the godly in this life show that we have much more to hope for from Christ in the life to come.

1. I shall state the point, in what sense it is said that christians are of all men most miserable if there be no life to come.

2. Confirm and prove it, by showing the validity of the apostle's reasoning.

I. For the supposition.

1. This is supposed, that affliction and misery is the common burden of the sons of Adam. In the present life all are liable to misery, some more, some less. We walk through a valley of tears, live in a groaning world; none have such an uninterrupted current and stream of worldly felicity but that they have their crosses and afflictions. These things are common to man. We are told in the book of Job, chap. v. 7, 'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;' and chap. xiv. 1, 'Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.' None can reasonably expect to be absolutely exempted from the common lot of human lapsed nature. Though life be short, yet it is long enough to be vexed with many sorrows. 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been,' saith old Jacob, Gen. xlvii. 9. Since they are evil, it is well they are but few. Most men little consider of this, that they come into the world to bear crosses, but rather imagine they come hither to spend their days in pleasure; at least, they do not mind the true cause of their troubles, nor the proper remedy. The true cause is sin; man's transgressions are the door by which it entered; and the proper remedy is the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Well, then, whatever may be the particular and various dispensations of God towards men, yet to be miserable in some sort and degree is common to all Adam's posterity, which should make us to look higher than the present life.

2. Of all men, virtuous good men are more miserable than others, if you consider their temper and the state of the world. Their temper; they deny themselves the pleasures of the flesh, and the world too often depriveth them of the ordinary comforts of life. They deny themselves the irregular pleasures of the flesh, as being an impediment to goodness, and that sense and appetite may not carry them against the dictates of reason, and so, instead of being led by conscience, as they ought, they serve their brutish passions and inclinations, as others do. This is the difference between them and others: 'They do not run with them into the same excess of riot,' 1 Peter iv. 4. But besides this, they are subject to many tribulations and persecutions. We often see that instruments of public good are made sacrifices of public hatred. The bad will hate the good, as differing from them, and disgracing that kind of life which they affect: Prov. xxix. 27, 'He that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.' They have a malignity and enmity to that goodness which they want themselves, and therefore deal worst with those that deserve best at their hands, because they cannot so quietly take satisfaction in their lusts, whilst others about them excel in virtue and holiness.

3. Of all good men, the profane carnal world is more enraged against christians than others. Probity and honesty in the heathens hath met with opposition in the world; and some among them, that would reform a depraved and disordered age, have met with sore troubles, and been hurried even unto death for seeking to stop the inundation of public vices. But especially hath this been the portion of christians: 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' Christianity is the more violently opposed because it



carrieth us to an higher pitch of purity and holiness than bare morality doth; for therein men are more devoted to God, and do most resemble him, as they are made partakers of the divine nature. Therefore a true, constant, christian course doth more enrage the world. Besides, it is most contrary to those diabolical impostures which have prevailed over the nations, and are entertained by them with much veneration, as being received by a long tradition from ancestors. Therefore the devil ever had a greater rage against this way; and many of the truths of it are not only mysteries, and therefore contradicted, but mysteries of godliness, tending to imbue men with right thoughts of God, and do more shake the interests of the devil's kingdom. Thence hath it been that christians have been worse used than other good men; and so, considered as to their outward estate, are of all men most miserable.

4. To induce men to lead such an holy godly life, which exposeth them to so many miseries, such motives are necessary as are greater than the temptations of the world; partly with respect to Christ, for Christ is so good that he would not impose this duty upon us without a sufficient recompense for our losses and troubles; for he came not to make us miserable, but happy, to save, not to destroy, that the world might have benefit by him, and not loss and trouble. We have a twofold apprehension of God, as an holy and happy being. There is in his nature, *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, goodness, and *τὸ μακάριον*, blessedness; accordingly Christ hath made a discovery of him to us when he came to plant godliness and holiness in the world. He hath revealed him as a God of infinite purity and blessedness, that, by imitating him in purity, we might be made partakers of his blessedness; or that, self-denyingly carrying on a life of holiness here, we might have our blessedness in a better life hereafter: his calling is an high and holy calling. And partly with respect to us: In this state of frailty, this living godly in Christ Jesus cannot be carried on unless our natural and sensual inclination be overruled by the bias of a stronger affection. The flesh in us is importunate to be pleased; and therefore when our troubles and trials are sore and manifold, what shall we do if we have not such higher motives as may rationally prevail with us? The voice of nature is, Spare the flesh; but the voice of faith is, Save the soul. Now if this salvation be not greater than the temptations of the present life, how shall we row against the stream of flesh and blood, and run all hazards with Christ?

5. Christ hath promised an happiness that will countervail all these afflictions. There is a fourfold comparison which believers usually make, or in scripture are taught to make, between this life and the next; as—

[1.] Sometimes they compare temporal good things with eternal good things, or the portion of a carnal man with the happiness of a child of God: Ps. xvii. 14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. But as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' That is, the rich and great men of

the world have all their good things allowed by thee in this life ; here they have all riches, and plenty, and a numerous posterity, wealth sufficient not only to enjoy themselves, but to leave abundantly to their children ; but I count myself abundantly provided for if I may have thy favour with a painful holy life here, and when I awake out of the sleep of death, may so see thee hereafter, as to be like thee ; I am satisfied with the hopes of the vision and fruition of God.

[2.] Sometimes they compare temporal evil things with eternal evil things ; as a prison with hell, or the killing of the body with the casting the body and soul into hell-fire : Luke xii. 4, 5, ‘ Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear : Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.’ Certainly it is more for our interest to fear displeasing God than displeasing men ; the utmost that men can do is to kill the body, and then their malice is at an end ; but God can cast body and soul into everlasting torments. Every one would submit to a lesser evil to avoid a greater. When you must sin to escape trouble in the world, you run into eternal sufferings to avoid temporal. No wrath like the wrath of God ; no torment like the fire of hell.

[3.] Sometimes they compare temporal good with eternal evil ; as Mat. xvi. 26, ‘ What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ’ The plentiful life of worldlings with the forfeiting of the soul ; the pleasures of sin for a season with the pains of hell.

[4.] The fourth sort of comparison which the scripture directs us unto is temporal bad things with eternal good things ; and that is the case we have now in hand. Thus Rom. viii. 18, ‘ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’ Sufferings for the present may be very great, but the glory that is revealed to us, and shall one day be revealed in us, is much greater ; as there is no comparison between a little flea-biting, or the prick of a pin, with eternal ease and rest, or the trouble of entering by a strait gate or entry into a glorious palace : 2 Cor. iv. 17, ‘ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ The sufferings of the present world are *leves et breves*, light and short ; not in themselves, but in comparison with eternal life. In themselves they may be some of them very sharp and grievous, and some also very long and tedious ; but look, what a point is to the circumference, that is time to eternity, and what a feather is to a talent of lead, that are present evils to future glory and blessedness. All this is spoken to show that it is better to be miserable with the people of God than happy with his enemies, and that we should not be drawn away from Christ neither by the comfortable nor troublesome things we meet with in the world.

6. This happiness which Christ hath proposed is at the general resurrection, or Christ’s coming to judgment ; for that is the point which the apostle is now discoursing of. There is a distinction between the good and the bad at death, when ‘ the spirits of just men are made perfect,’ Heb. xii. 23, and the spirits of the wicked are sent to prison,



1 Peter iii. 19. The soul dieth not with the body, but some go one way, some another; the souls of just men to God's palace of glory, where they are with Christ, and the souls of the wicked to the prison of hell. But this retribution is not sufficient, for two reasons—because it is private, and doth not openly vindicate the justice and holiness of God; and it is but on a part, the soul, and not the body.

[1.] Because it is private, and dispensed apart to every single person, man by man as they die. Certainly it is more for the honour of God to bring his judgment to light, as the prophet speaketh, Zeph. iii. 5, 'Every morning doth he bring his judgment to light.' Here the love of God towards the good, and the justice of God towards the wicked, is not brought into the clear light, nor at death; neither the mouth of the pit is visibly opened, nor the glory of heaven exposed to view. But then this different respect is more conspicuous when the justice of God hath a public and solemn triumph, and his enemies are branded with shame and ignominy, and the faith of his elect found to praise and honour, and the one are publicly condemned, and the other justified by the judge sitting upon the throne: Acts iii. 19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

[2.] As it is upon a part, the soul only. The bodies of the holy and the wicked are both now senseless, and moulder into dust in the grave; and till they be raised up, and joined to their souls, can neither partake of woe or weal, pleasure or pain. The soul, though it be a principal part, is but a part. The body essentially concurrereth to the constitution of the man; and it is the body that is most gratified by sin, and the body that is most pained by obedience; and therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and coheir, is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatever it be. Therefore, that we may not be in part punished, nor in part rewarded, there is a time coming when God will deal with the whole man, and that is in the day of Christ's solemn court and audience, when all the world shall be summoned before his tribunal.

7. The apostle proveth this, because the righteousness of God's government will not permit that his people should be accounted of all men most miserable.

To clear this I shall show—

First, In what sense the apostle saith, If there were no life to come, christians were of all men most miserable.

Secondly, How this will not consist with the righteousness of God's government.

First, In what sense the apostle saith, If there were no life to come, christians were of all men most miserable. I put this first question, that we may not mistake the apostle's meaning, when he pronounceth christians to be of all men most miserable if our hopes in Christ were terminated with this life. Take him right; and therefore,—

1. Negatively.

[1.] It is not to deny all present providence or watchful care over his oppressed people. No; Eccles. iii. 16, 17, 'And moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.' He meaneth not in the mountains of prey only, but in the tribunals of justice; there was

iniquity and wickedness : 'I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked ; for there is a time there for every purpose, and for every work.' So again, Eccles. v. 8, 'If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter ; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' Both these places show that there is a providence ; though God for a while permit his meek and obedient servants to be oppressed, and in the eye of the world they seem to be forgotten and forsaken and utterly left to perish, yet in due time God will exercise a righteous judgment on them and their enemies. The like you have, Ps. lviii. 11, 'So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' It is not meant of hereafter, but now. It is many times found that godliness and holiness are matters of benefit and advantage in this world, abstracted from all reward in another life. The world is not governed by chance, but by a wise and most just providence. It may be God doth not relieve the oppressed so soon as men would, yet in due time he will not fail to show himself the ruler of the affairs of mankind ; so that this is not his meaning, to exclude all present providence.

[2.] Not to deny that we have such benefits by Christ here in this world as not to make our condition more valuable than that of the wicked. We have hopes by Christ of the pardon of sins, and that is a blessedness : Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' Of communion with God : 1 John i. 3, 'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.' And that maketh way for a full joy, and countervaileth temporal evils. We have not only an interest in the love of God, but a feeling of it in our souls : Rom. v. 3-5, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' All things are sanctified to us as we are sanctified to God : Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.' But yet this is not all ; therefore the apostle saith, 'If in this life only we had hope, we are of all men most miserable.'

[3.] The apostle's drift is not to compare wickedness and godliness, as abstracted from the eternal reward ; as if a wicked man were more happy than an afflicted godly man. No ; Christ's worst is better than the world's best ; godliness and holiness is amiable, or a reward in itself. Better be good though miserable, than bad though prosperous ; for holiness and godliness, though abstracted from all reward in another life, is an excellency and perfection of human nature : Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight ;' Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' It is an honour put upon human nature to have the image of God impressed upon it. The more good we are, the more orderly we live, and agreeably to reason and those souls with which we are created ; and the actions which the law of Christ calleth for at our hands are fittest to be done by us if they were not commanded, nor ever should be rewarded in us.



2. Positively ; and so—

[1.] The apostle speaketh not of their inward enjoyments, but their outward estate, which no ways seems to answer God's covenant love nor governing justice ; for the calamities of the godly raise two doubts— (1.) How this doth stand with the love and goodness of God to his people ? This was the psalmist's temptation : Ps. lxxiii. 1, ' Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' It is a most certain and a most infallible truth that God is abundantly gracious and kind, and not only faithful and just to all his sincere servants ; but we are under no small temptation to doubt of the truth of this when they are under severe scourges and chastisements, or exercised with continual afflictions, and others live in pomp and luxury, and all manner of secular felicity. (2.) But the other temptation to doubt of God's governing in righteousness was Jeremiah's temptation : Jer. xii. 1, ' Righteous art thou, O Lord ; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously ? ' Certain it is that God is righteous ; yet when his people are in a sad condition, and their enemies thrive and prosper by their wicked courses, their minds are troubled ; for to appearance none are in a worse condition than they that love God most, and serve him best, till he be considered not as to his external but eternal estate.

[2.] The apostle's meaning is, that a man cannot rationally be induced to submit to christianity, and, in defiance of all temptations, to lead an holy godly life, without the expectation of the happiness of another world. The temptation lieth in things present, and our strength lieth in a due reflection on things to come. Faith must guide us, that sense may not mislead us ; and so, when the world's best and Christ's worst are brought into competition, the soul is the better enabled to make a right choice : Heb. xi. 26, ' Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; for he had respect to the recompense of reward.' It is the hopes which Christ offereth in a better life which strike all temptations dead. Now in case this should not be, the apostle pronounceth christians to be of all men most miserable, upon a fourfold account—

(1.) Because their very present comforts would seem to be but a fantastical impression or a fanatical illusion ; for our whole religion would be a falsehood if the great promise be chimerical, or a mere dream and supposition : 1 John ii. 25, ' This is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.' And so how can we imagine but that all the comfort which we take in the pardon of sins, communion with God, and the sense of his love, are mere conceit and vain imagination ?

(2.) Because their future hopes and trust would be utterly disappointed, and they deluded in their greatest expectations : 1 Tim. iv. 10, ' Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.' It is our hope in God through Christ, or the assurance of an eternal reward, which is the only ground of our suffering patiently anything that befalleth us. He is the preserver of all mankind, but hath promised eternally to save those that believe and obey him.

Therefore, if there were no world to come, christians would not only be disappointed of their great hope, which is the worst kind of vexation, but draw a suspicion upon all these advantages that we seem to reap by Christ and enjoy here upon earth.

(3.) Their earnest desires would not be fulfilled if there were no blessedness to come. We may prove eternal life by the disposition and instinct of nature towards happiness in general, yea, eternal happiness, which if we should not enjoy, that desire were in vain; but God doth nothing in vain. The apostle intimateth this universal desire in all rational creatures; they all grope and feel about for an eternal and infinite good: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.' Other creatures besides man are satisfied with what they have here, but the soul of man is satisfied with nothing but the eternal enjoyment of what is good, an immortal estate, an infinite good; this is the universal inclination of all mankind. Whence cometh that desire to be so universal if there be nothing to satisfy it? Where is this immortality that we seek after? Not in temporal enjoyments, riches, honours, and pleasures; they perish, and we perish. Yea, the lust of these things passeth away in time: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.' Not in surviving fame; that is a shadow, like the pleasure which those take who want children in playing with little dogs and puppies. It lieth in the eternal enjoyment of God. But we urge not this now; we urge the desires of the renewed and sanctified, which do much more prove it, for these act more regularly, and direct their desires and hopes to a certain scope and end; and these are excited by the Holy Spirit of God, who imprinteth the firm persuasion of this happiness, and inclineth us to it, and stirreth up these groans after it: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' The word of God warrants these desires, and the Spirit of God kindleth them in our hearts, and that usually in our gravest and severest moods, when we are solemnly conversing with God in his holy worship; then doth he raise up these affections towards heavenly things, as in the word, prayer, and sacraments; then is this relish left upon our hearts; and the more serious and holy any are, the more do they feel of this. And also in our bitter sufferings for God: Rom. v. 3, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience;' 1 Peter iv. 13, 14, 'But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil-spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' This is a greater argument than the bare instinct and desire of nature. Certainly if our holiness be our torment, and God beget in us these desires which he never meant to satisfy, then we are of all men most miserable.

(4.) There would be no recompense for their greatest losses. Christ requireth us not only to venture, but lose our lives for his sake: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother,



and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Now if our hopes in Christ be at an end with this life, what encouragement have we to lose our lives for Christ's sake? Nature will teach us to submit to a lesser evil to obtain a greater good than that evil depriveth us of; but what will teach us to lose the greatest benefit we are possessed of when nothing cometh of it? Grace indeed teacheth us to quit this frail life for the hopes which Christ hath given us of an immortal blessed estate; but if that be not, christians are of all men most miserable, who had better have kept that life which they had till a natural death called them from it, than to have lost it for nothing.

Secondly, Having vindicated the apostle's meaning, I shall prove that it is inconsistent with the righteousness of God's government that his people should be always of all men most miserable. For a time they may be so, but not for ever. Certainly God is righteous; to deny him to be just is to deny him to be God and the governor of the world. The perfection of his nature includeth his justice; so doth also the eminency of his office: 'Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?' Rom. iii. 5, 6; that is, he were then incapable of governing mankind. But when is this righteousness manifested? Not always in this world, especially to those who perish in their afflictions and persecutions, which they endure for his name's sake. No; 'He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31, and that is at the general resurrection. God now judgeth the world in patience, winketh or conniveth at many faults, endureth the wicked with much long-suffering, but then he will judge the world in righteousness.' None are punished now besides or beyond their deservings; but all are not punished according to their deservings, nor are the wrongs of his people righted, nor their labour of love recompensed. Therefore we must expect another day and time when that shall be done; and that is most fully and universally done in the great and general day of judgment, when the dead shall be raised out of their graves, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. And so it serves the apostle's scope to prove a resurrection.

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## SERMON II.

*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.—1 COR. xv. 19.*

II. I MUST show the validity of the apostle's argument, that there must be a life to come, because otherwise christians would be of all men most miserable. The apostle urgeth it here as a strong proof of the resurrection, and elsewhere he urgeth it as a demonstration of the general judgment; as when he, speaking of the persecutions of the righteous,

telleth us, 2 Thes. i. 5, 'Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,' *ἐνδεργμα*, a plain and certain demonstration. Surely the argument is cogent and conclusive.

But where lieth the force of it ?

1. I shall argue from the nature of God ; and there—

[1.] I shall begin with his wisdom, which doeth things according to number, weight, and measure, and doth rightly dispose things in their proper places. This wisdom of his will not permit the disjunction of these two things so closely united together as sin and punishment, holiness and happiness. This cannot be but there will be an appearance of deformity and irregularity. If there be such a thing as good and evil, *bonum et malum morale*, as reason will tell us there is ; again, if there be such a thing as pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, or *bonum et malum naturale*, as sense will tell us there is ; then it is very agreeable to the wisdom of God that these things should be rightly placed and sorted. That moral evil, which is sin, should be punished with natural evil, which is pain and misery ; and that moral good, which is holiness, should end in joy and happiness ; these seem to be such natural relatives, that without great incongruity they cannot be parted. It seemeth uncomely and an uncouth thing to us when it is otherwise : Prov. xxvi. 1, 'As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool ;' that is, as snow and rain in harvest and summer come unseasonable and unwelcome, and breed a kind of displeasure in our minds, so we look upon it as a blemish or an uncouth thing when the wicked are exalted. We have compassion on a miserable man, whom we esteem not deserving his misery, but are moved with indignation against one that is happy and successful, but unworthy the happiness he enjoyeth. This is the general sense of mankind, which is a proof and plain document that we perceive an excellent harmony, and natural order between these two things, sin and misery, holiness and happiness ; and this sentiment is some stricture and shadow of the perfection of God's wisdom ; and therefore, though for a time, while both good and bad are upon their trial, the good are not regarded, nor the bad punished, yet the wisdom of God will not permit it to be always so, that the godly should be in an afflicted and distressed condition, and the wicked prosperous.

[2.] Come we to the holiness of God, which inclineth him to hate evil and love that which is good. Surely God is not indifferent to good and evil, or more partial to the evil than to the good. That were a blasphemy, and such a diminution of God's holiness as should be abhorred by every good christian. No ; 'He hateth all the workers of iniquity,' Ps. v. 5 ; and again, Ps. xi. 7, 'The righteous Lord loveth righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright.' Well, then, wherein is this love and hatred demonstrated ? God doth not openly declare it in his present dealings with the rebellious and the righteous, therefore it shall be seen in his final dealing with the wicked oppressors of his people, and those that walk uprightly. Therefore there is a life to come, for in this life this love and hatred is not sufficiently expressed ; not his hatred against the wicked, even in the judgment of them who have no great knowledge of the nature of sin, and the punishment which is competent thereunto ; nor his love to the godly, who are often ex-



posed to bitter sufferings, and seem to be less favoured in the course of his external providence than their enemies. Therefore there is a time to come, when he will show his love to the good in making them everlastingly happy, and his detestation of the wicked in eternal torments.

[3.] Come we now to the justice of God. It is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil, and that he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between the disobedient and the righteous. Conscience hath a sense of this, and therefore checketh and cheereth, as we have done good or evil. Heathens had accusing or excusing thoughts, which the apostle urgeth as an evidence to the gentiles of judgment to come: Rom. ii. 15, 16, 'Which show the works of the law written upon their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.' If every man's thoughts do accuse or excuse him respectively according to the nature of his actions, then there is in nature a sense of this different retribution. Notions of good and evil are as naturally implanted in our hearts as notions of truth and falsehood, and a man is as sensible of a difference between comely and base as between the right hand and the left; only the notions of good and evil are sooner corrupted than the notions of truth and falsehood. However, the workings of conscience cannot utterly be choked and deadened in any, though most men seek to stifle it, and the voice of it be oftentimes unheard. The very profane have hidden fears frequently revived in them because of these retributions of God's justice. The apostle telleth us, Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' They were none of the tenderest men that are here spoken of, but such as were extremely debauched and corrupted, and did delight in the company of those who were as corrupt as themselves. Well, then, conscience is sensible of a reward and punishment, but this is not fully nor universally dispensed in this world; yea, rather the worst are permitted to enjoy most here, when the good are kept in a low and bare condition. And that is not the whole case; the worst do not only differ from the best, but are permitted to triumph over them. Now no righteous governor will suffer his disobedient subjects to persecute those who most carefully obey him, if he hath power to remedy it; and therefore, though he may permit it for a time, yet he will call them to an account, and then amends and satisfaction shall be made to them that have suffered wrongfully. Therefore the wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future reward.

[4.] Come we now to the goodness of God. The Lord is inclined to do good to his creatures; and if there were no sin to stop the course of his bounty, there would be nothing but happiness in the world; but certainly if any recover out of a state of sin, and are willing to devote themselves to God, and to condemn all their natural interests for his sake, certainly the Lord will be good and kind to them. A certain truth it is that no man serveth God for nought; and it is *ἐν πρώτῳ*,

one of the first maxims of religion, that 'God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,' Heb. xi. 6. Next to his being, we believe his bounty, that God's service, first or last, will turn to a good account. And it is the rather to be believed by us, because carnal and corrupted nature begrudgeth everything, and in the eye of sense all is lost that is laid out upon God. We say with Judas, 'What needeth this waste?' The same opinion that Seneca had of the Jewish sabbath, the same thoughts have carnal men of the service of God. He said the Jews were a foolish people, *quia septimam ætatis partem perdunt vacando*, because a full seventh part of their lives was lost in idleness and rest. While men are under the influence of such thoughts, they will never do anything for God that is great and worthy. And therefore, to confute this false conceit during the time of his patience, the superficial service he getteth from us hath its reward. He giveth many temporal blessings to those that worship him in the slightest fashion; as he suspended his judgments upon Ahab's mock humiliation, 1 Kings xxi. 29; and his present providence plainly declareth that none shall be a loser by God, nor do anything for nought. He pleaded by the prophet against this people for their sorry services and contemptuous usage of him: Mal. i. 10, 'Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand;' that is, the porters of the temple did not open and shut the doors for nought, nor the Levites that kindled the fire, nor the priests attend upon the burnt-offering for nought; they were all well rewarded with tithes, portions, and oblations, and this by the Lord's own appointment and allowance. And again, if anything be done sincerely, though never so mean and inconsiderable, it hath its reward: Mat. x. 42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' The smallness and meanness of the benefit, help, and refreshing, done to any in Christ's name, shall not make it lose its estimation and recompense. This, though hardly credited by the unbelieving world, is very true: 'Verily I say unto you,' and 'he shall in no wise,' &c.; they are emphatical expressions. But now the more eminent services, which are carried on with hazard and difficulty and very considerable self-denial, surely they shall not fail of their recompense. Whatever we lose for Christ, we shall receive again with infinite advantage: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution, and in the world to come eternal life.' He shall in this life, in the midst of his persecutions, and the time of his trials and troubles, have an hundred-fold; not in kind, an hundred wives and mothers (as Julian and Nero scoffed at the christians), but in value, in peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the satisfaction of having discharged his duty. But God will not rest there; in the world to come he shall have eternal life.



Now, then, the argument groweth upon our hands. If self-denying obedience would be not only man's loss but utter ruin, and he be made miserable by his duty without any recompense, God would not only be not the best, but the worst master; and they that suffer the loss of life and all things by the cruelty of their persecutors would be utter losers by their faithfulness and obedience to God, which is contrary to the experience of all mankind, and all that natural light and sense of religion that is in men's hearts. Surely Christ would never proselyte us to a religion that is our undoing, nor shall any of his people be losers by him, or they that venture the most for him be in the worst condition; and therefore there must be another life, wherein he will fulfil the good he hath promised, and execute the evil threatened.

2. From the nature, state, and condition of man.

[1.] He is God's subject; not left at liberty to break or keep God's laws at his own pleasure, which he would seem to be if no harm would come of it, yea, present good and profit; for we see here the wicked live a life of pomp and ease, and often have their will upon the godly, and oppress them at their pleasure; their wickedness is their advantage. Now this is not only a great discouragement to the gracious and heavenly-minded, but would quite destroy all obedience, if there were not assurance of a better estate. Therefore God expresses himself as particularly engaged to punish such as flatter themselves with hopes of impunity, though they go on in their wickedness: Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' They that add the moist to the dry, and the dry to the moist. So Zeph. i. 12, 'And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' And on the other side, he considereth the case of the faithful, that they have an opposite principle against their duty within their hearts, which must be always curbed and suppressed; and they meet with many temptations from the oppositions and reproaches of those that like not that sort of life which they addict and apply themselves unto; and therefore if they have not sufficient motives to keep them in the love of God and obedience to the end, how shall they bear up against all these blasts of persecution, when all the world is against them? They need both their cordials and their solaces from another and better world. Therefore God assureth them that their fidelity and obedience shall not be lost, that they are blessed already, and shall be perfectly blessed hereafter: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him;' 1 Peter iv. 13, 'But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy;' that is, that these sufferings are sure pledges of the glory that

shall ensue. Their joy is suspended while the glory of Christ is under a veil, but when he is manifested to the world, they shall be manifested to be the children of God. Alas! otherwise what would become of the best servants God hath in the world, when they are hooted at by the clamours of the wicked rabble, and pursued with sharp laws, and exposed to great difficulties and hardships, if they had no life to live but this? The bare sense of our duty would not support us in this state of imperfection if there were not a great recompense of reward set before us; so that the persuasion of another life is necessary to secure our duty.

[2.] Man is bound to be upright and sincere in God's service, or to get such a constitution of soul as to resolve to adhere to God, whatever temptations he hath to the contrary. Our Lord describeth the good ground to be 'that good and honest heart which, having received the word, keeps it, and brings forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. This was a principle not denied by many heathens, who esteemed the love of honesty and goodness better than this mortal life with all its appurtenances, and thought that a man was never sincere nor thoroughly honest till he did abhor the practice of any villany and impiety more than death, and those things which were *τὰ ἀπλῶς ἀγαθὰ*, absolutely good, a man ought to love them more than life, and lose life rather than omit their practice. Now such principles, whether they saw it, yea or no, do necessarily conclude and infer a life after this much better than this is, and an estate of torment much worse than death to those that have lived and died dishonestly; for everything that hath a being doth by an indispensable law of nature desire the continuance of its being, but most of all its well-being, or the bettering of its present estate. Therefore every man (if there be not a life after death) is bound to seek the preservation and continuance of this life above all things in the world besides; and to do that, no device would be dishonest or practice amiss. But all they that have ever heard of the name of virtue abhor this principle as base and odious, that a man should make what shift he can, though never so base and wicked, to maintain and save his life. No means used to this end are to be accounted foul, for nothing is so ill as death, nothing so good as life. But if this would destroy all honesty and virtue, then certainly we have hopes and fears of another life. If you will say, No; virtue is a sufficient recompense to itself, at what rate soever it be purchased and maintained; yet what is there to countervail all the losses and grievances it exposeth us unto, such as the loss of life and limbs? Virtue is a sufficient reward to itself, *spe, non re*, in hope, not in the thing itself, but so far as it is the only way to everlasting communion with God, who is our exceeding great reward, or so far as the assured hope of a better life after death is inseparably connexed to the constant practice of godliness in this life. And to do good merely for goodness' sake, without any eye or respect to the reward, is a strain of devotion contrary to that doctrine which is taught us by Christ and his apostles.

[3.] With respect to man's comfort and solace in his troubles, which ariseth from reflecting on our future reward when all things go cross to us here: 'Comfort one another with these words,' saith the apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 18. Now what words were those? The belief of a blessed



resurrection of those that died in or for the Lord ; that is, by occasion of the faith of Christ. He thought that consideration sufficient to yield matter of comfort or support to them. These are consolations proper to christians, because they are sure, as depending upon Christ's word ; and they are congruous and suitable, because their hearts are set upon these things ; not upon a vain world, but a blessed and glorious estate that Christ hath offered, and himself is entered into ; and when we get thither, our affections will be satisfied, desires granted, and hopes fulfilled. So that still the apostle's reasoning is strong : ' If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable ; ' for our consolations, which are fetched from the other world, are our proper consolations.

[4.] With respect to the credit and esteem of God's servants in the world. It is neither for the glory of God nor the safety of his people that the most eminent virtue and goodness should lie under perpetual infamy. God's servants do not only suffer hard things, but their names are cast forth as evil. Now this is not for the honour of God, because it reflects upon him when the children of wisdom are represented as sons of folly, in checking their lusts, venturing their interests, and renouncing their all for their fidelity to Christ, as if they did foolishly in running into such inconveniences, when they might spare themselves, and sleep in a whole skin. Now it is a great dishonour to God that his wisest and most faithful servants should be accounted fools, and an humorous odd sort of men, that needlessly trouble themselves and others. This hardeneth the world in sin, and would quench and destroy all zeal for God, if there were not a time coming when the wisdom of the world shall be seen to be the greatest folly, and that there are no such fools as those that employ their greatest abilities in attaining present pleasure, profit, and preferment ; but those are the wisest adventurers who have sold all to promote the glory of God and gain Christ, who look not upon things as they appear now to the sensual and deluded world, but as they will be found at the last day, when all things shall be seen in their own proper colours. Neither is it for the safety of the saints, who, though they seek nothing but the public good, are traduced as the troublers of Israel, and their way condemned as factious singularity. Therefore it is a great satisfaction that we have hopes that things shall be reviewed, and that which is good be restored to its public honour, and the godly, who prize a good name above all earthly interests, shall have their faith found to praise and honour and glory : 1 Peter i. 7, ' That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. '

Use 1. It sheweth us how much it concerneth us to be assured of the future estate. It is the life of our religion ; it bindeth our duty upon us by the strictest tie, and doth also establish our true and proper comfort. If we may have hope of better things from Christ in another world, not only in our calamities, but by our calamities, we should not have such dark and doubtful thoughts about eternal blessedness, but live more in the clear foresight of it by faith, and the foretaste of it by hope. Especially should this support us in two cases—in sharp afflictions, and in death.

1. In sharp afflictions. We are apt to take scandal and offence at

the sufferings that befall us for righteousness' sake ; but consider not only the promises of Christ, but that our very persecution is an argument of our final deliverance. The opposition of ungodly and unrighteous adversaries is 'to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God,' Phil. i. 28. That they are wretched and obdurate people, and run on to their own destruction ; but that you are sincere and penitent believers, who are not drawn away from your fidelity to Christ by any terrors whatsoever. It is not *ἐνδειξις*, not only an argument to confirm the hopes of the gospel, but a mark and token of your sincerity ; it confirmeth your right. Well, then, though our afflictions be smart and grievous, let us comfort ourselves with these hopes. You are not to look to present things, but future ; not to what is applauded in the world, but what opinion Christ will have of them at the last ; not to what you feel now, but what you shall enjoy hereafter. Though all things appear with pomp and glory on the world's side, and terror to the saints, yet this scene is soon withdrawn, and present time is quickly past, like a dream or piece of fantasy ; and then there is an utter inversion of things ; shame is on the wicked's side, and honour put upon the saints ; and the shame and glory are both eternal ; and when they enter into everlasting torments, we enter into our master's joy ; and the children of God, that are derided and vilified in the world, are then approved and justified by Christ ; and it shall be plainly seen that they have chosen the better part that have chosen the faith, and patience, and holiness of the saints.

2. In death. This is a comfort suited to that time. When you die, you may commend your souls to Christ ; as Stephen : Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' God trusted Christ with souls from all eternity ; they were given him by way of charge and reward ; and you may trust him, for he is able to make good his trust : 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' If they are consecrated, they may be committed. And you may dismiss your bodies to the grave, there to rest in hope : Acts ii. 26, 'Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope ;' Acts xxiv. 15, 'And have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.' So Acts xxvi. 6-8, 'And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come : for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?' Death seemeth to make void all the promises at once, but there is an estate after death. The dead shall rise ; and to men bred up in the church this should not seem incredible. It is not incredible in itself, considering the justice and power of God ; and this should not seem incredible to us, since all religion tendeth to it ; but rather you should entertain it as a matter of undoubted certainty. All true believers do look and long for and prepare for this blessedness ; otherwise why should they trouble themselves about religion, which abridgeth them of present delights, and often exposeth them to great difficulties and sufferings ? But there is another life, which is happy and joyful ; and therefore we serve God instantly day and night.



*Use 2.* That it concerneth us to see this blessed estate, not only by the light of faith, but reason. Though the light of scripture be more sure and clear, yet the light of nature hath its use. Nature saith, It may be; faith saith, It shall be; yet the light of nature must not be rejected.

1. Because things seen in a double light work the more strongly upon us; as our affections are stirred more by a double consideration than a single. As Paul said of Onesimus to Philemon, that he was dear to him, but much more dear to him 'both in the flesh and in the Lord,' ver. 16, as being one of his faith, and one of his family; so this worketh upon our faith, when even nature teacheth us that it is reasonable to expect such a retribution; then all vain cavils are refuted. All have not received the light of scripture, at least with such veneration and reverence as they ought to do: to such the light of nature is a preparative inducement either to believe, or to believe it more firmly. Nay, the children of God have not such a steady belief of the life to come as they ought to have, especially in time of temptation, as the time of grievous and bitter persecution is. Surely we need all the succour and relief which the nature of the thing will afford. Evil is present and pressing, and our great hopes are to come; surely then, besides the grounds of faith, we must study the helps of faith. The grounds of faith are the promises of the gospel; the helps of faith are such demonstrations and evidences as the light of nature will afford in the case. Therefore reason must be allowed to be an handmaid to faith.

2. Because by this means a temptation is turned into an argument. Men doubt of the being of God, of providence, and the future estate, because of the afflictions of the good; and this is one means to settle you in the belief of these things. It is good to observe how differently men will reason from the same principles; for the wicked draw another conclusion hence, either that there is no God, or he hath no respect to human affairs, or that all things are governed by chance, or the like. So elsewhere you may see what contrary and different conclusions the carnal and the spiritual draw from the same premises; as David infers the immutable certainty of God's promises: Ps. cxix. 89-91, 'For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven; thy faithfulness is unto all generations. Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth: they continue this day according to thine ordinance.' But the scoffers said, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' 2 Peter iii. 4. Because the frame of nature had kept one constant tenor and course, they plead for the eternity of the world, and the falsehood of the promises; but David was hereby confirmed in the belief of God's constancy and fidelity. So from the brevity of life; see the different conclusions drawn from hence: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 'The time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as if they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use the world as not abusing it.' On the contrary: 1 Cor. xv. 32, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' So from the grace of God: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness;' compared with Rom. vi. 1, 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?' So also, 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'I dwell in an house of cedar

but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.' Observe the workings of David's heart: The Lord hath built me a stately house, but what have I done for God? But those wretches, Hag. i. 2, 'This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.' So 1 Sam. iii. 18, 'It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good;' compared with 2 Kings vi. 33, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' See Prov. xxvi. 9, 'As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.' All is as the heart is.

3. Because if the perverse carriage of things now be not a confirmation to your faith, it will at least be an help to your meditation. Improve the argument as it was set forth before, by your most serious thoughts; thus: Surely there is a God; he is wise, holy, just, and good, and would not impose duty upon a man, but he hath encouragements and rewards to quicken him to the performance of it. Few christians are so firm and strong in believing but they may find it a prop to their faith. Certainly all are so barren of thoughts that they will find it an help to their meditation. Would God make laws with a sanction of penalty and reward, and never look after them more? Doth he delight in the prosperity of his servants or their afflictions? Would he raise hopes and desires which he never meant to satisfy? give the wicked power to afflict and vex his people, and never call them to an account? bid us venture our all for him, and give us no recompense? If such thoughts were more frequent with us, God would bless them to the increase of faith, love, and hope.

*Use 3.* Is to persuade us to live in the constant hopes of this blessed estate in the life to come. Hope is a certain and earnest expectation of the promised blessedness. Let me show you—(1.) The necessity of this hope; (2.) The encouragements of it.

1. The necessity that the hope of eternal glory should always be cherished in us.

[1.] Because it is a special act of the new nature: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' As soon as we are children, we look for a child's portion. The new nature presently discovereth itself by its tendency to its end and rest, which is the fruition of God in heaven. Indeed, the scriptures speak of a twofold hope—one that is the immediate effect of regeneration, and flows from our acceptance of the new covenant, and dependeth upon the conditional offer of eternal life; we take it for our happiness, resolving to seek it in God's way; without this we are not new creatures. There is another hope, which is the fruit of experience, and belongeth to the seasoned and tried christian, who hath approved his own fidelity to God, and hath had much trial of God's fidelity to him. This is spoken of, Rom. v. 4, 'Patience worketh experience, and experience hope.' This produceth not a conditional certainty, but an actual confidence of our own salvation. The former is more necessary, for we live by it, but this is very comfortable.

[2.] Because it is the great end why the scriptures were written, to beget and raise this hope in us: Rom. xv. 4, 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' It is the business and design of these holy books.

[3.] Because the keeping up of this hope with zeal and industry is



the distinguishing character between the temporary and the sincere convert. The one loseth his taste and comfort, and so casteth off the profession of godliness, or neglecteth the powerful practice of it; the other is diligent, serious, patient, mortified, heavenly, and holy, because 'he holdeth fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end,' Heb. iii. 6. And his end sweetens his work, for this grace doth quicken the whole spiritual life: Titus ii. 12, 13, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

[4.] Because we have nothing else to support us and fortify us against the difficulties that fall out between our first right to eternal life and our full possession of it. In our journey to heaven there are many sufferings and trials which must be undergone, and hope is our strength and support. He that sets his face heavenward will find difficulties that attend his service, temptations that assault his constancy, and troubles and calamities to which his religion exposeth him. Now it is hope carrieth us through, and therefore it is compared to an anchor: Heb. vi. 19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;' and to an helmet: Eph. vi. 17, 'And take the helmet of salvation,' compared with 1 Thes. v. 8, 'And for an helmet the hope of salvation.' As we would not go to sea without an anchor, and to war without an helmet, so we must not think of carrying on the spiritual life without hope; nothing else will compose the mind, and keep it stable in the floods of temptation, or cause us to hold up our heads in our daily conflicts and encounters. Without this anchor our souls are in danger of spiritual shipwreck; without this helmet our heads are exposed to deadly blows from sin, Satan, and worldly discouragements.

[5.] We shall need it not only while we live, but we shall have most need of it when we come to die. They that are destitute of the hope of glory then are in a dangerous, woful, and most lamentable case: Job xxvii. 8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' They may be full of presumption and blind confidence while they live, but what hope have they when they come to die? All their worldly advantages will afford them no solid comfort. They live in a presumptuous dream that all shall be well; but then they die stupid and senseless, or else despairing, and their hopes fail them when they have most need of them.

## 2. The encouragements of it.

[1.] God's gracious covenant and promises. God would not invite and raise an hope to disappoint it, for surely God will not disappoint the creature that dependeth upon his word; and therefore we are allowed to challenge God upon his word: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' It contains a double argument; the promise was of God's making, and the hope of his operation; the grant of the new covenant, and his influence by the Spirit. We have a strong tie upon God; as he giveth us the promise, which is a ground of hope, we may humbly put the bond in suit; and when his Spirit hath caused the hope, it is not with a purpose to defeat it.

[2.] Consider what a foundation God hath laid for his promises: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his;' 2 Cor. i. 20, 'For all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.'

[3.] Observe what God hath given you by way of earnest. Hope is not built upon promises alone, but also upon assurances and earnest; the promises are contained in the word of God, but the earnest is given into our hearts: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts;' 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit;' Eph. i. 13, 14, 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' Though God be truth itself, and promiseth nothing but what he meaneth to perform, yet he will give earnest of his promises, and a pledge of his affection to us. An earnest is a part of the sum which is promised, so is the earnest of the Spirit a part of the promised felicity. God would not altogether weary us, and burden us with expectation, but giveth us somewhat in hand. Surely he that giveth us earnest will give us the whole sum. The earnest of the Spirit consisteth in light, life, grace, joy; one drachm of these is more precious than all the world, and yet these are but an earnest. Now, having such a confirmation in the midst of our doubts and fears, let us with more confidence look to receive the whole in due season.

[4.] Some already have got home to God upon the same terms, and in the same way in which you expect to get home to him. Think often of the happiness of the blessed, who are now enjoying what we expect, and are in possession of that supreme good which we hope for. They are entered into the joy of our Lord, and have neither miseries to fear nor blessings to desire beyond what they enjoy; they possess all that they love. And though the time of our advancement to these privileges be not yet come, yet we should look and long for it. We are all of the same family: Eph. iii. 15, 'Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.' It is but one household; some live in the upper room, some in the lower, some in heaven, some on earth; but we are all of the same society and community: Heb. xii. 23, 'To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.' We are said to be already come into this fellowship, only they have gotten the start of us, and are made perfect before us, that we should follow after. We are reconciled to the same God by the same Christ: Col. i. 20, 'By him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.' And we expect our portion from the bounty of the same Father. If he hath been so good to that part of the family which is now in heaven, will he not be as good to the other part also? Therefore they that are working out their salvation with fear and trembling may encourage themselves, and look upon this felicity as prepared for them, though not enjoyed by them. It will one day be their portion, as well as those others who have passed the pikes, and are now triumphing with God.



## SERMON UPON ROMANS II. 7.

*To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.—Rom. ii. 7.*

IN this scripture we have a plain and full character of the heirs of promise, or a short but complete description of that good which is necessary to life. The words are occasioned by the apostle's mentioning of the righteous judgment of God, which rendereth to every man according to their works. That general mentioned in ver. 6 is more distinctly explained in the next verses, wherein he sheweth how the righteous judge will carry himself towards the good and towards the bad in the judgment of absolution and condemnation: towards the good in the text; toward the bad, ver. 8, 'But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.' The one is a reward of grace, and the other is a punishment awarded by his exact justice. We are to consider the first of these, the reward of grace, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.'

In the words observe the qualification and the reward—

1. The qualification or description of the heirs of promise.

[1.] By their end and design: they 'seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.'

[2.] The means or way wherein they seek it; by 'well-doing.'

[3.] Their constancy and perseverance in that way, καθ' ὑπομονήν, by 'patient continuance.'

Well, then, here is a short and full description of those who shall be saved. They are those who, out of the hope of the eternal reward, persevere in the obedience of the truth; for they that 'continue in well-doing' are opposed to them that 'obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness,' whereby is intended those that sin against the light of nature, and refuse the direction of the gospel. So that 'well-doing' must be stated partly by the light of nature, and partly by the light of scripture; or rather, by this latter alone, as it compriseth and explaineth the other. And their constancy and patient continuance in this work is as considerable as the work itself. Continuance implieth a constant tenor of righteousness and holiness; and patient continuance implies continuance notwithstanding temptations to the contrary, or bearing the persecutions which they underwent for the duties of the

christian profession, still going on in the pursuit of that reward which Christ hath promised.

2. The reward is 'eternal life.' This they looked and this they laboured for. They were not carried on upon temporal encouragements, but eternal bliss in the world to come; and this is an excellent counterpoise against the loss or the discomforts of the present life.

*Doct.* That God will give eternal life to all those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek after it.

The point will be best opened by discussing the circumstances of the text. I shall speak—(1.) Of the qualification; (2.) Of the reward.

I. The qualification. And there I must speak—

First, Of their design and aim: they 'seek for glory, honour, and immortality.' In all businesses and affairs the end must be first thought of.

Now these persons which are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even 'glory, honour, and immortality.' Amongst men, the ambitious, who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, and aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms and brutish epicures; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base and low in comparison of sincere christians, who 'by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality,' and whom nothing less will content and satisfy than the enjoyment of God himself in his heavenly kingdom, and all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants. The threshold will not content them, but the throne; their end is far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. And whereas others do carry themselves but as an higher and wiser sort of beasts, and so are unworthy of an immortal soul, these carry themselves as men possessed with a divine spirit. The beasts have an instinct that guideth them to seek things convenient for that life which they have; and a man that is satisfied with his portion here, and only relisheth the contentments of the rational and bodily life, carrieth himself more like a living creature than a rational creature, more like a beast than like a man; all their business and bustle is to have their wills and pleasure for a while, as if they had not any hopes or fears of any greater things hereafter: Ps. xlix. 20, 'Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;' because he merely inclineth to present satisfactions; for reason is a middle thing between the life of faith and the life of sense. If it be not sublimated by faith, it is debased by sense; and then what great matter is it if you be a man, or a dog, or a swine, if reason be only given you to cater for the body, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof? But let us more distinctly see what is the aim and design of those noble and brave spirits. There are two things in the text—the object and the act; the thing aimed at, and their respect towards it.

1. The thing aimed at is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' Let me open the meaning of these words apart, and then show why so many are heaped together.

[1.] *Glory.* Glory is *status illustris*, appearing excellency. There is a glory of this world, but that is fading: 1 Peter i. 24, 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.' The



flower is more fading than the grass itself, and is sooner shed than the stalk rotteth ; so many a man's excellency dieth before he dieth, and his glory is gone, when he remaineth as a neglected stalk. But this is a more solid glory, called by the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' This glory is in their persons : Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us ;' Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ;' Mat. xiii. 43, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ;' 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' All the spectators shall stand wondering what he meaneth to do with those who were but newly crept out of dust and rottenness, so wonderful is the glory of the saints in the world to come. And as this glory concerns their persons, so their state. Christ will advance them to a glorious estate, to high dignity and honour, which the scripture expresseth sometimes by thrones : Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne ;' sometimes by a crown : 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.' Visible marks of favour and honour will Christ put upon them.

[2.] Honour ; that imports praise and commendation, for honour is a testimony of excellency. To seek the honour of this world is destructive to faith : John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ?' But the honour which Christ will put upon those that are faithful to him in the world to come is the great object of faith, by which we vanquish those temptations of disgrace and scorn which we meet with here in this world. Christ will then commend their faith before men and angels : Rev. iii. 5, 'I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Oh, what a blessed thing is it to be owned by Christ, and approved as faithful in his service by the judge of all the world, at whose sentence we must stand or fall ! The apostle saith, 2 Cor. x. 18, 'For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.' To have a testimony in our own consciences is very sweet. Let the world slander, yet, if God approveth, it is sufficient. But it will be more honourable to us when the judge upon the throne shall acquit us ; and not only so, but approve and commend us. It is said, 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart ; and then shall every man have praise of God ;' that is, be not too forward in your censures ; in time God will display the seducers, and discover every man's intentions and purposes. Then they that deserve it shall have shame, and every man that hath done well shall by God be justified and commended. What kind of approbation we shall have is shown : Mat. xxv. 21, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' This is the honour which the saints expect.

[3.] The third word is 'immortality,' *ἀφθαρσίαν*, incorruption. All

the glory and honour of the world soon fadeth away. If our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are dead? Alas! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour which Christ will put upon the saints. Their glory is immortal, and never withereth. The glory and honour of the world is uncertain; their hosanna is soon turned into a *crucifige*, crucify him: 2 Sam. xix. 43, 'We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye.' And in the very next verse, chap. xx. 1, 'We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.' They who but just now claimed ten parts in David, presently disclaim and disown him, as having no part in him at all; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. And as our glory perisheth, so we perish, even the best of men: Acts xiii. 36, 'David after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.' What a deal ado men keep to get praise and honour in the world; but what doth this profit you when you are dead, and must be laid in the grave with others? But the saints look higher. As they seek 'glory and honour,' so they seek incorruption or 'immortality;' a glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity.

Thus we have considered the words apart. Now why are so many heaped up together? It is not done casually; the same is observed elsewhere: 1 Peter i. 7, 'That your faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Now this is done partly to represent the fulness of this blessed and glorious estate. The honour which Christ puts upon his servants at his appearing is manifold. Many words cannot express it; they shall be much commended, and gloriously rewarded. And partly to recompense and make up the shame and disgrace of our trials. How infamous soever Christ's servants be in the world, yet they are glorious with God, and honourable in his sight; and 'when Christ shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory,' Col. iii. 4. Well, now, this is the object of the expectation.

2. Their respect to it; they seek it. Seeking implies two things—(1.) An hearty desire; (2.) An earnest endeavour in the use of means.

[1.] An hearty desire; for seeking is the earnest desire of a thing lost or absent. The seeking of this glory, honour, and immortality implieth an earnest desire of it, as appeareth by Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above;' which is further expressed by, 'Set your affections upon things above.' And this is not a slight desire, but such a desire as prevaileth above the desires of other things; such an affection to them as is not controlled by other affections: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' First, that is, so as our pursuit of other things doth not cross our affections to these. Many desire heaven and glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and take up with the pleasures, and honours, and profits of the world, and they become slaves to their fleshly appetites and senses, and the good things here below.

[2.] Seeking implieth diligence and an earnest endeavour, such as the woman used that sought her lost groat: Heb. xiii. 14, 'Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' If we desire it,



and long after it, something must be done in order thereunto. As our desires are greater, so our endeavours will be greater than after worldly things; for to seek is to bestow our earnest care and serious diligence upon it. See how it is expressed in scripture; by labour: John vi. 27, 'Working,' and 'working out;' Phil. ii. 12, by 'pressing towards it;' Phil. iii. 14, by 'striving;' Luke xiii. 24, because we meet with opposition. You must not think to come to the enjoyment of this great happiness with idleness and cold wishes. No; we must be at pains, and such pains as flesh and blood will count hard labour. Well, now, we may from hence conclude the first part of the mark of the heirs of promise.

(1.) By the object; they are distinguished from the wicked and carnal part of the world, who covet the honours, riches, and pleasures of the present life; but these are engaged in a more noble design; they 'seek glory, and honour, and immortality;' that is, they seek not vainglory, but labour to make themselves truly glorious, honourable, and immortal.

(2.) Again from the object and act together; they distinguish themselves from all infidels and unbelievers; for they 'seek glory and honour' where it is to be found, and in the way wherein it is to be found, and so go upon sure grounds. They are ascertained by the truth of God's word, and depend upon it, that if they seriously set themselves to obey and honour God in the world, they shall have glory and honour with him: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Those that honour me, I will honour;' John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, him shall my Father honour;' and elsewhere. Upon this they are certain.

(3.) By the seriousness of the act; they distinguish themselves from hypocrites or partial believers. Those that have a slight sense of eternity will desire 'glory, and honour, and immortality;' but to desire it so as that it shall be their top care; to desire it so as that all other things should be lessened in their opinion, estimation, and affection; to desire it so as to labour after it in the first place; this is the disposition of the sincere only. They can withdraw the veil of sense, and look to the glory that cometh from God only. They prize it above all the glory of the world, and resolutely choose it for their portion, with an habitual and thorough consent of their wills; and the drift, and aim, and bent of their lives is to be for God and their salvation, and this is first and chiefly sought after in all their endeavours.

Secondly, The means and way wherein they seek after it: 'By patient continuance in well-doing.' A good design without a good way is nothing; and therefore, next to a right end, we must choose a right way; and if we desire salvation, we must mind the right way thither. Now in the way and means three things are considerable. Here is—(1.) Well-doing; (2.) Continuance; (3.) Patient continuance. If one of these be wanting, all cometh to nought. If well-doing be wanting, our perseverance is but an obstinacy in things sweet and pleasing to the flesh; and our patience but a carnal self-denial, nothing conducing to our great end. If well-doing be regarded, yet if there be not a continuance, or a continuance only when we are put to no trial, then the benefit is lost. All three must concur.

1. For well-doing. Let us state that first, that we may not be mis-

taken. The world is filled with ill notions; every man applaudeth himself in his own course, be it never so vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they thrive in their several ways, they will think they do well: Ps. xlix. 18, 'Though whilst he lived, he blessed his soul; and men will praise thee when thou dost well to thyself.' A man's own self-deceiving heart measureth good and evil by his present condition in the world. The brutish worldling applauds himself in his own course when it succeedeth. The glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of, and cherisheth and pampereth himself. The ambitious applaudeth himself in his good fortune. The prodigal, when he spendeth, thinketh he doeth well; and the covetous, when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well; and contrary persons will say so. Ay! but there must be another rule than the fancies of men; that is, well-doing, which really turneth to our eternal good. To do well is to obey righteousness, to obey the truth; for it is opposed to those that violate the light of nature, and wrangle and dispute away that true religion which is offered for their cure and remedy.

[1.] To do well is to obey righteousness, or to act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us with respect to our relation to God, others, and ourselves. There are but three beings in a moral consideration—God, neighbour, and self. Paul's adverbs are suited to them: Titus ii. 12, 'Soberly, righteously, and godly.' As to self-government of our fancies and appetites, we are to live 'soberly,' in an holy weanedness and moderation in the midst of all present delights and comforts. As to our neighbour, we are to live 'righteously,' in all justice, truth, mercy, fidelity in our relations, as parents, husbands, subjects, children, wives. As to God, we are to live 'godly,' in an holy subjection to him, and entire dependence upon him, and communion with him. So to do well with respect to God is to behave ourselves as to one that is so excellent, powerful, and good, and upon whom we depend so much, not breaking his laws for all the world. As to others, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do even so to them,' Mat. vii. 12. Not only negatively, to prevent the wrong, but positively, to do good. As to ourselves, we must subordinate all things to our true happiness, and be more careful for the soul than for the body. All this, righteousness, or the evidence of natural light, calleth for at our hands, that we love our creator, and live to him, and depend upon him; for if he be God, he is our first cause, highest Lord, chiefest good, and last end. That love to others is showed in doing to them as we would should be done to us. We would have others helpful to us, so must we to our power be helpful to them; he that will be for none but himself cannot justly expect that any should be for him. And for ourselves, man consists of a body and of a soul. Now all our senses and bodily powers and appetites must be subordinated to the good of the soul; for the soul is the chiefest part. Well, then, if we live in the neglect of God, and be only self-lovers and self-pleasers, and wrong ourselves by gratifying our flesh, do we do well? If we prefer every paltry vanity before the favour of God, slander and wrong our neighbour, please appetite before reason, and let the beast ride the man, surely we obey unrighteousness; we do not do well

[2.] We must obey the truth; that is, act agreeably to the revealed



will of God in scripture ; that is to do well. It is the scripture which helpeth us to distinguish good from evil, and will be a sure direction in well-doing : Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path ;' Prov. vi. 23, 'For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light ;' Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' We are not to be ruled by our own thoughts, but by God's word, which amply sets forth our duty to us. The light of nature is very dim, and it would be a matter of great difficulty to find out our duty if we had no supernatural light to help us. Therefore God hath given his word, and that not only to instruct us in moral duties, most of which are evident by the light of nature, but also in supernatural verities, which tend to our relief and deliverance by Christ. Well, then, well-doing is not one work only, but all our entire obedience, which is necessary to salvation, that we may not only love God, do good to others, govern our appetites and desires, but believe in Christ, and live according to his holy institutes, and perform all the duties which belong to his new remedying law. This is well-doing.

2. There must be continuance in well-doing. As we must endeavour universally to do all that God hath commanded us, so we must continue this care unto the end : Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' In a journey it is not enough to go a mile or two, but we must continue till we come to our journey's end ; so must we never give over whilst we are in this world. There may be interruptions, diversions, and stragglings, but a christian gets into the way again. Sometimes we slip and stumble, and sometimes step aside, but we must not go back again. Some are good for a pang or fit : Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always !' I might heap up many considerations here, but the thing is evident. The law bindeth continually, and grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye is always upon us, and every hour and moment we are anew obliged to him for his benefits. How reasonable is it our duty should last, and the use of means be continued till we attain our end ! Therefore do not lose your crown, and the benefit of all you have done already. The promise runneth to perseverance : Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

3. Here is patient continuance ; that is necessary also. The good ground is described to be that which 'bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth fruit with patience. The stony ground was impatient of contradiction and afflictions ; the thorny ground was impatient of the delay of the reward, and therefore took up with present things, riches and honours and voluptuous living ; but they that have a deep sense of the other world, and can tarry God's leisure, enduring the hardships of obedience, and look for their happiness in the world to come, that is the good ground. So Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' We shall meet with opposition within and without ; till we can deny ourselves,

our hearts are not sound with God. We need the working patience, because of the labour and pains which belongeth to well-doing; and the waiting patience, because our reward is to come; and the bearing patience, because of the troubles and dangers which we must endure, if we would be faithful with God; loss of estate, slanders of the wicked, and sometimes danger of life. The working patience should not be grievous to us, because the pains of godliness will be recompensed with the fruit of it, the peace and comfort that followeth it; and because there is more labour in committing sin than doing good. The waiting patience should not be grievous, because there must be a time for the trial of our faith. They are hypocrites which must have their reward at present: Mat. vi. 2, 'Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' The believer he can wait for it; he looketh for glory and honour too, but not now. The bearing patience should not be irksome, because faithfulness in our trials is most comfortable to us, and most acceptable to God. Comfortable to us; we have not ordinarily so clear a proof of the reality of grace as when we are under sore trials: 1 Peter i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Faith is then faith indeed, and obedience obedience indeed. The greater the work, and the more impediments we meet with, self-denying obedience doth most evidence itself to the conscience. Whilst we do anything for God, while we do it without shame, opposition, and loss, it is more hard to interpret our sincerity: it is more acceptable to God; it is tried friendship and obedience which is most valuable. The obedience of a soldier is pleasing to a general in a time of peace; when he saith to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; but especially in the most desperate hazards, when he doth not dispute commands when he is bidden to go upon the cannon's mouth. From the whole, mortification, self-denial, contempt of the world, patience under manifold sufferings, is necessary to all that would be faithful with God, and are sure notes of his people.

II. The reward is eternal life. This will make amends for all. By it is meant all manner of happiness.

1. Eternal life is a freedom from all misery whatsoever, in estates, names, relations, bodies, souls. As the body is free from all weakness, so the soul is free from all sin; faultless, without spot or wrinkle.

2. There is a perfect and entire possession of all manner of good; God is all in all to them.

3. This estate is to abide for ever and ever.

Use 1. Let us examine whether we be in the number of those that shall be saved. Eternal life is believed of all christians, at least with a dead opinionative belief; they do not count it a lie or a fable. Now, who are those that shall enjoy it? for God will not give it to all.

I answer—Here is a plain note and evidence by which you may judge your claim—(1.) They are such as seek it; (2.) They seek it in a way of well-doing; (3.) They continue thus to do.

1. They that seek it; for God will never bring us to heaven without our wills nor against our consent, nor make that man happy that doth not desire to be so; yea, that doth not seek it in the first place.



Now this cutteth off a great many ; all them that do nothing towards the attaining of it, and all them that seek nothing, have no settled design, but live at haphazard, as occasion offereth, and leave the boat to the stream ; that come into the world they know not why, and go out of the world they know not whither. All such careless and inconsiderate people can have no claim ; all such have no higher end than to enjoy their sensual pleasures while they may. Besides, they that do not seek it in the first place. They do something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose. The strength and choice of their desires and endeavours are not directed this way. Eternal life must be esteemed and chosen above other things which draw our hearts, and must be chiefly sought after in our endeavours, and then something may be gathered from seeking.

2. They seek it in a way of well-doing ; not only praying for it, but living according to the directions of God's holy word ; that is to say, by seeking his favour in Christ, and maintaining communion with God in the Spirit, by serious converses with him in the means of grace, governing our affections and passions, and by a constant self-denial, mortification, and temperance, getting a victory over the world and the desires of the flesh. And as to others, by carrying ourselves in all meekness and charity, without envy, malice, injury, and oppression, and doing good to all as we have opportunity, especially, to the household of faith. This is the well-doing recommended to us in the scripture, and this is our beginning and progress towards eternal life ; for we must apprehend it not only under the notion of glory and immortality, but under the notion of exact holiness as well as complete happiness ; under the notion of conformity to God and communion with God ; for God's will is done in heaven as well as upon earth ; and the heaven of christians is to see God and to be like him. Many seem to desire it as a state of felicity, but they hate it as a state of perfect holiness (which is the better part of it), a sinless, immaculate estate. Well, then, by this part of the evidence many are excluded. Partly all those who live according to their own humours and fancies, and vain desires, and the customs of men, or the course of this world, and were never acquainted with a life of holiness spent in communion with God and subjection to his will. Partly also all they that do evil, dishonour God, oppress and wrong their brethren by violence or slanders, and live in malice and envy, who were never acquainted with self-government, or bridling their sensual and worldly desires, so that the honours, profits, and pleasures of the flesh have the pre-eminence in their esteem, choice, and practice. Partly too all those that do no good ; that have not fed, visited, clothed, relieved the destitute, comforted the afflicted : Mat. xxv. 41-45, ' Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these,

ye did it not to me.' In short, all those who yield no obedience to God, but cast off his yoke, or that yield a partial obedience, submitting it may be to outward acts of worship, but neglecting the duties of justice and charity ; or, on the other side, make conscience of duties of commerce with men, but delight not in communion with God, and trouble not themselves with seeking his favour and reconciliation by Christ.

3. They are such as continue patiently in a course of well-doing to the end of their lives ; for it is not enough to begin well, but the work must still be carried on till we come to receive our reward : Heb. iii. 14, 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' But you will say, If our comfort be suspended upon this condition, then we can never know that we are heirs of promise till we come to die. I answer—It is not *eventus perseverandi*, not actual perseverance to the end, which maketh the evidence ; but *labor, conatus, et cura perseverandi*, the resolution and endeavour to continue in a diligent use of all means, to continue in the way of well-doing, and to please God in all things. And the more you thus give diligence to persevere in this holy purpose, the more assurance you get of the goodness of your condition : Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end ; that ye be not slothful,' &c. A christian may be assured, and his assurance groweth upon him the more he sets himself continually to obey God. Now this part of the evidence cuts off partly all those that are only good by fits and starts and good moods ; sometimes they set their faces heavenward, but their lusts return, and then they are worse than they were before : partly those who prove final apostates ; they began to build, but they leave the work unfinished, and 'after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome,' 2 Peter ii. 20.

*Use 2.* Is exhortation, to press you—

1. To seek after honour, glory, and immortality. Oh, this is the best pursuit you can engage in. What is better for you ? Can the world or the devil propound anything so good, or better, than this glorious estate ? Are the dreggy contentments of the flesh, the vain-glory and honour of the world, the uncertain riches we enjoy here, worthy to come in competition with eternal life ? Surely in matter of motive a christian hath the advantage, however a carnal man hath the advantage in matter of principle, because in him it is wholly entire and unbroken.

2. To well-doing. Surely you should not need many arguments to press you to do well ; rather to press you to do ill should be the more difficult task, it is so contrary to our reason, and the right constitution of our natures, but that we are strangely depraved. O christians ! what do we invite you to, but to love God above all, and seek his favour in Christ, and love your neighbour as yourself, and by temperance, purity, and chastity to preserve your own vessels, both bodies and souls, in sanctification and honour ? Surely these duties are not gyves, but ornaments ; and such subjection to God should be preferred before liberty in sinning.



3. To continue with patience. I will press you to this by two arguments—

[1.] There will be always the same reason for going on that there was for beginning at first. Did the sense of your duty invite you? The same bond of duty lieth upon you still. Did the hopes of the world to come engage you? Heaven is not yet obtained. And will you lose all the cost you have been at already? Gal. iii. 4, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain?'

[2.] There can be no temptation great enough to recompense you for the loss of your reward of eternal life. Is it reproach? When men despise, God will honour thee; and it is a blessed thing to be reviled for righteousness' sake. Is it worldly loss? Better lose the world than lose our souls: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Is life in danger? Losing life for Christ is the way to save it; and John xi. 25, 'Though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Is it the continual reviving of troubles? In the other world there is nothing to assault thy perseverance; there thou art out of the gunshot of temptations, and shalt serve God without defect or difficulty; there our service is not troublesome to us.

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## SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 14.

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*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—*  
2 COR. xiii. 14.

My purpose is to open the apostolical benediction or prayer for the Corinthians ; for our way of blessing is only to pray for those whom we bless. To love others is to desire their good. They that love best and most desire the best good for their friends ; and better good there cannot be desired than that those we love may have God for their God. Now they that have God for their God have all that is in God, and all that is God. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will employ all his wisdom, power, and goodness, to save them from all evil, and bring them to eternal blessedness. This is that which is prayed for in this place : ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.’

In the words we have—

The thing prayed for, together with the persons from whom ; or rather—

1. The matter of the blessedness wished, ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the communion of the Holy Ghost.’

2. The effectual application to the Corinthians, ‘Be with you.’

3. The confirmation of these hopes and desires, in the word ‘Amen.’

1. The matter of the blessing. It consists of three branches, suited to the persons of the godhead—(1.) The grace of Christ ; (2.) The love of God ; (3.) The communion of the Holy Ghost.

2. The effectual application, ‘Be with you.’ These things are with us, or in us, two ways—(1.) In the effects ; (2.) In the sense.

[1.] In the effects, when we have the fruits of the Father’s love and Christ’s grace and the Spirit’s operation : ‘That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them,’ John xvii. 26.

[2.] In the sense and feeling, when we comfortably know it is thus with us : John xiv. 21, ‘He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father ; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him ;’ Rom. v. 5, ‘Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.’

3. The confirmation of these desires and hopes, in the word ‘Amen ;’ which is *signaculum fidei*, an expression of faith ; and *votum desiderii*, an eruption of our desire and love.



*Doct.* That all the persons of the blessed Trinity do concur to the happiness and salvation of believers.

Here let me show you—(1.) How they do concur ; (2.) Why they do concur.

I. How they do concur. Let us explain in the text.

1. Here are all the persons of the Godhead mentioned. God is taken personally for the Father, and then Jesus Christ and the Spirit are distinctly mentioned. So in other scriptures: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' The fundamental cause of salvation is the election of God, who, when he had all fallen mankind in his prospect and view, was pleased to choose out some to grace and glory, passing by others. Then there is reconciliation ascribed to Jesus Christ, and sanctification to the Spirit, as the means by which this purpose is brought about. The beginning is from God the Father, the dispensation is by Jesus Christ, and the application is through the Holy Ghost. So also Titus iii. 4-6, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' God the Father out of love sent a saviour, by whose grace we are saved ; and God the Son, from God the Father, sent God the Holy Ghost, who applieth the love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by renewing and healing our natures. So 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, 'But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ ;' where the three persons are again mentioned, and their concurrence to our salvation.

2. That words proper to their personal operation are used ; for there is love ascribed to the Father, grace to the Son, and communion to the Holy Ghost. The Father is represented as the fountain of love and all goodness, and as expressing and exerting his love by the Son and Spirit. By the 'grace of Christ' is meant all that gracious provision which he hath made for man's salvation, both in the reconciling God to us, and procuring the mission of the Spirit. 'Communion' is ascribed to the Spirit, because all is applied or communicated to us by him. Or thus, our salvation is ascribed in election to the love of the Father, in redemption to the grace of the Son, in sanctification to the communion or participation of the Holy Ghost.

[1.] 'The love of God.' Love is ascribed to the Father ; for the love of God is the cause of all. Consider his giving Christ for us, or giving Christ to us, and us to him. (1.) In giving Christ for us: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Christ did not merit electing love, but love rather moved God to give Christ for sinners. Love appointed the Son to be our Redeemer ; there was the bosom and bottom cause. (2.) In giving

Christ to us : John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out ;' John xvii. 6, 'I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world ; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word.' And in time he doth execute and accomplish this out of his mere love : Jer. xxxi. 3, 'The Lord hath appeared to me of old, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' As by elective love the heirs of salvation were distinguished from others in God himself, or in his intention and purpose, so by regeneration and converting love they are distinguished from others in themselves, and set apart from the rest of the world, to be the objects of his special love and instruments of his glory. Besides, there is a love of God whereby he loveth us when we are in Christ Jesus, which is the ground of our safety and preservation : Rom. viii. 38, 39, 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

[2.] 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' What is intended us by the Father is brought about by the grace of the Redeemer, and therefore all the provision Christ had made for our salvation is called grace : 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich ;' that is, ye know his gracious condescension in submitting to such a mean condition for our sakes. So 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' Grace is God's favour and love, which was first purchased by Christ by his obedience and bloody sufferings : Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' Secondly, applied by his intercession, which is also another act of his grace ; and therefore we 'come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16 ; namely, 'having a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,' ver. 14, who knoweth our infirmities. Thirdly, as it is bestowed by him, as Lord of the new creation, upon such terms as every way keep up the honour and interest of grace in our salvation : Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' All the saving benefits we have by Christ are from grace, such as reconciliation with God, the renovation of our natures, and everlasting glory and happiness ; they are all dispensed in a gracious way from first to last.

[3.] 'The communion of the Holy Ghost.' Communion is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. It may be rendered communion or communication. The Spirit reneweth and changeth our nature, and worketh faith and holiness in us. Light, life, and love are the special benefits which he communicates to us. He doth enlighten our minds, to understand and believe the great things prepared for us by God through Jesus Christ. It is said, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 'But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.' So Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus



Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Life; for we live in the Spirit, and are born of the Spirit; that is, have a new life begotten in us, therefore called a Spirit of life: before we lived as men, now as christians. And love; the heart is bent and inclined to God. It began in love, and endeth in love; love of God endeth in love to God. This threefold effect is expressed, 2 Tim. i. 7, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and a sound mind.' Life in power, as light in a sound mind. And it is altogether called the divine nature: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature;' for it answereth to the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

3. That all these words imply riches of goodness, bounty, and liberality. Love noteth a ready inclination to do good to others, without the excitement of external motives; it openeth and enlargeth the heart to another, and then the hand cannot be shut: 2 Cor. vi. 11, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you; our heart is enlarged.' Grace is some good thing freely given. So *κοινωνία*, communion, noteth a liberal effusion or distribution of the graces of God's sanctifying Spirit; and so it suiteth with *ἀγάπη Θεοῦ*, and *χάρις Χριστοῦ*, 'the love of God,' and 'the grace of Christ;' elsewhere, *κοινωνία πνεύματος*, 'the communion of the Spirit,' is joined with 'bowels and mercies:' Phil. ii. 1, 'If any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;' that is, if you have received any good from Christ by the Spirit. So Rom. xv. 26, 'For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.' What is in our translation to 'make a contribution' for the saints, is in the original *κοινωνίαν ποιήσασθαι*, to make a communion or communication. So 2 Cor. viii. 4, 'Praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints,' *κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας*. So 2 Cor. ix. 13, 'And for your liberal distribution unto them,' *ἀπλότητι τῆς κοινωνίας*. So here, 'the communication of the Spirit.' If you will render it 'communion,' this is the great effect of the love of God and the grace of Christ, that we are made members of Christ's mystical body by the Spirit: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body;' and so are united to the head, and to one another by this bond of union. The church is a mystical body, whereof Christ is the head, and the Holy Ghost is, as it were, the heart of it; the one guideth this great body, the other quickeneth it. Now in this mystical body we actually come to the participation of what Christ hath purchased for us by the Holy Ghost.

4. These make way one for another, or work into each other's hand; for what the Father intended, Christ purchased, and the Spirit applieth. God the Father is as the fountain of grace, Jesus Christ as the conduit or pipe to convey it to us, and the Holy Ghost the immediate operator and worker of it; the Father of his good pleasure electing sinners to grace and glory, the Son by his obedience and sufferings purchasing it, that it may be brought about in a way convenient for

God's honour, the Spirit by his virtue and power working grace in them. There is not a different effect from the Father which is not from the Son, and from the Son which is not from the Spirit, but they concur in an united way, that what cometh from the Father cometh from the Son and the Spirit; the Father makes way for the Son's work, and the Son for the Spirit's. So back again; the Spirit is said to honour the Son: John xvi. 14, 'He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you;' and the Son is said to glorify the Father: John xiv. 13, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' The Spirit acts as sent by Christ, and Christ as sent by the Father. This is necessary to be regarded by us, because as our salvation in the general is from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit, so in all our commerce with God, God the Father, as a judge, by the spirit of bondage sendeth us to Christ as mediator, and Christ as mediator by the Spirit of adoption sends us back again to God as a Father. It is a great help to prayer: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' To whom are we praying? To God as a Father. Whence have we hopes of audience? By Christ. Who giveth us an heart to come? The Spirit.

## II. The reasons why they concur.

1. That we may have the higher esteem of the work, which hath such agents concerned in it. It is no slight thing to bring about the salvation of lost sinners; all the persons of the godhead are at work about it; and shall not we, who are the parties interested, be employed about it also? God is in good earnest; for therefore before all worlds he employed the riches of his wisdom and grace to save us in this convenient way: 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.' And who are we, that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago? Jesus Christ hath spared no pains to accomplish the work of our redemption, but freely offered himself to this work: Heb. x. 7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' He repented not his undertaking, but was fully contented, if souls may be saved: Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' And the Holy Spirit continueth striving with us, though often grieved by our obstinacy and disobedience: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man;' Isa. lxiii. 10, 'They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.' Many a conviction do we smother, and often check, and resist his motions, yet he is importunate to prevail with us.

2. That our hearts may be raised to give equal glory to all the persons concerned. We must honour the Son as we honour the Father, as it is expressly said, John v. 23, 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that hath sent him.' There is an honour due to God only, not to be given to any other. Christ is equal with the Father in participating this honour; he is to have the same glory of believing, love, fear, and invocation. So also for the Spirit; he is an object of invocation; for as the apostle wisheth and desireth love from the Father and grace from Christ, so a liberal distribution and com-



munication of gifts and graces from the Spirit. Now, to excite us to give this due respect to all the persons, every one concurrerth in his way to promote our final happiness and salvation. The Father deserveth this esteem from us. Many think of God the Father as all wrath and justice, difficult to be reconciled to man; and of the second person of the Trinity as more gracious and merciful. No; the love of God is the original of our redemption: God 'spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,' Rom. viii. 32; and 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them,' 2 Cor. v. 19; and 'the Father himself loveth you,' John xvi. 27. Christ came to show the amiable nature of God: 'Being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' Heb. i. 3. Then for the Lord Jesus, in Christ the glory and riches of the grace of God doth more eminently and palpably appear. This is the contemplation of the saints: John i. 14, 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory (the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth;' Eph. iii. 18, 19, 'That ye may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God;' Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' His grace, thus condescending to men, is more eminently seen: Rom. v. 8, 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' and Rev. i. 5, 'To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And for God the Spirit, we also find our hearts raised to give him glory; partly by the motions of his grace, which we feel in our hearts: Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness;' Neh. ix. 20, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' The sanctifier, guide, and comforter of believers is God's Spirit; he is the only author and fountain of all goodness and holiness. And partly by the comfortable sense he begets in us of our adoption: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' and of our hopes of glory: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.' And partly by the support and comfort we have from him in all our conflicts and distresses: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil-spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.'

3. That we may with more confidence wait for the beginning, progress, and consummation of our own salvation. There is the eternal love of God, the all-sufficient merit of Christ, and the omnipotent operation of the Holy Ghost. What cannot eternal love, infinite merit, and almighty power do? As Christ is necessary to keep all right between us and God, so the Spirit is necessary to keep all right between us and Christ. As we need a person of the godhead to satisfy the justice of God, so also to overcome our obstinacy and unbelief, and to vanquish temptations, and doubts, and fears, and to settle us in the

comfort and hope of the gospel. It is God's prerogative to settle the conscience: Isa. lvii. 19, 'I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace, to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh, saith the Lord.' God is the supreme judge and the wronged party: 'He commands his loving-kindness in the day-time,' Ps. xlii. 8. By a powerful, imperial act of the Spirit, he stilleth our doubts and fears.

4. That the whole glory of our salvation may redound to God alone. Therefore the divine persons carry it on among themselves; love, grace, and communication do all: 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved,' Eph. i. 6. Grace is the fountain cause of our election; grace bringeth it about; for who could ransom a soul except Christ had taken the work in hand? There would have been a stop there: Ps. xlix. 7, 8, 'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.' There would have been a stop there. Grace applies all. What are we before the grace of the Spirit? how unworthy till grace make us lovely! how unable to lay hold on it before the Spirit of God enable us! Rom. v. 6, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' And how unable are we to make good use of it afterward! For (1.) What was our behaviour before calling? 'Disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures,' Titus iii. 3. (2.) In calling, it was slight and refractory: Job xxxiii. 14, 'For God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not.' He often inviteth, but men take no notice of what so much concerneth their soul's good, but slight all warnings and instructions, lay not their condition to heart, and many an opportunity is lost; but God overcometh men's evil by his own goodness, and will not lose his elect; therefore, ver. 16, 'He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction;' that is, breaketh in upon them in such a powerful way that they cannot withstand it. (3.) Since calling there are frequent interruptions of obedience: James iii. 2, 'For in many things we offend all.' Our best performances are weak and full of blemishes: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' So that from first to last all floweth from God, and all floweth from love, and grace, and communication of the Spirit, that our persons and actions are accepted. Now it is our duty to acknowledge this love, and highly esteem this glorious grace, and to testify our esteem by word and work. By word, in praises; by deed, expressing our thankfulness in our lives, that they may be a constant hymn to God, and a praise of his grace that we are made partakers of.

*Use 1.* To encourage us to seek after the effects of this love of God, grace of Jesus Christ, and communion of the Spirit.

1. I will plead your want. What will you do if you have not Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for your God? You have your beings from him for a while, but the day of his patience will not always last. You must die, and give an account; and woful, yea, dreadful, will their account be who are not only involved in the common apostasy, but have heard of the transactions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost about their recovery, and never minded the benefit, or made light of it. Surely it is woful dulness and stupidity not to value it, and to feel no need of it:



2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.' What grace was that? 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,' chap. v. 19. That grace which the Father hath contrived for your salvation; that grace for which Christ laid down his life; that grace which is so affectionately tendered in the gospel; that grace and that free undeserving mercy which is so suitable to your necessities. Will you despise this? It was an act of infinite love of God to design it and reveal it to you; of Christ, to purchase it for you; of the Holy Ghost, to offer it to you; yea, to strive with you to make you capable of it. Shall the gospel be cast away upon you, and all those gracious methods of God frustrated? Or have you no need of it? How will you maintain peace in your consciences now without grace? How will you stand before God's tribunal at the last day?

2. Let me plead the worth of it. He that hath this love of God, this grace of Christ, this communion of the Spirit, wanteth nothing to his solid happiness; he hath all necessary things in their cause and fountain; for he hath God, Christ, and the Spirit; for all things come from the love of God, and the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. And he doth possess all things in that measure that God sees fit for him: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' It bringeth other mercies with it, and nothing is good without it. All things are mercy, even those that fall out contrary to our expectations: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.' Well, then, they that know the want of grace, or the worth of grace, will earnestly seek it.

3. Let me plead the possibility of obtaining it; for the three persons conspire and agree together, not to your ruin, but salvation. Whatever may be expected from infinite love, eternal merit, and almighty power, it is all offered to those that will seek after it. There are none but are sensible that they need to address themselves to God for pardon and a blessing. Now God is an holy God; how shall sinners deal with him? As the prophet said to Ahab, 'If it were not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee,' 2 Kings iii. 14. Whatever we seek and expect from God, we must seek it from Jesus Christ, who hath purchased all: Isa. liiii. 5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;' Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' And he is appointed to bestow all that which he hath purchased: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' And by his intercession he doth apply all: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Well, then, if we will go to Christ, he sendeth us to the Spirit, who worketh all, and doth accomplish in us the pleasure of his goodness. Go to the Spirit; he must heal you and help you. The Spirit sendeth us to the means: Acts i. 4, 'And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem,

but wait for the promise of the Father.' You shall find him present in the ordinances. Oh, what encouragement have we to be serious, and in the use of the means by which the Spirit worketh !

4. We are obliged by our baptismal covenant: Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost take upon them to convey this love, grace, and power ; and we take upon ourselves to accept the Father for our Lord and happiness, Christ for our redeemer and saviour, and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter ; to obey his motions, to use those means whereby we may feel his power, to avoid those wilful sins which may grieve the Spirit, and cause him to suspend his operations and comforts. There we are consecrated as children to the true God, consent to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and obey his Spirit. Now make conscience of this vow.

*Use 2.* Is to put us upon self-reflection. Is the love of the Father, and the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost with us ? Do we seek our happiness in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ? Or do you consent that God shall be your God, as reconciled to you in Jesus Christ ?

1. As to the Father. Do you own him as your rightful Lord ? and are you willing to return to his obedience by Jesus Christ ? Do you take him for your portion and felicity ? Do you expect to receive all your happiness from him ? valuing and preferring his favour and love above all the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world ? Ps. iv. 6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.' Admiring it ? 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons God !' 'His favour is life,' Ps. xxx. 5. Yea, better than life: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' Willing to forsake all rather than forsake him. Behave yourselves with that thankfulness as those that owe yourselves and all your happiness to him : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' Carry it as those that are obliged by love.

2. Do you take Christ for your only saviour and redeemer ? giving up yourselves to be saved by his merits, righteousness, and intercession, as he hath promised in the word ? Do you trust yourselves and souls with him for pardon, peace, and endless happiness ? depend upon his covenant and promises for reconciliation with God, and everlasting fruition of him in glory ? trampling upon all things, rather than turn your back upon your Redeemer's grace ?

3. Do you yield yourselves to the Holy Ghost ? Are you unfeignedly desirous to be rid of sin as displeasing to the holy God, how dear soever it hath been to you ? And do you submit to the Spirit, to be sanctified and perfected by degrees in the means he hath appointed, being ruled by his motions rather than the desires of the flesh ? Do you observe his accesses and recesses, and behave yourselves accordingly ?



SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

March 21st

March 21st 1881



## THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR THOMAS ABNEY, Kt., Alderman,  
and Lord Mayor of the City of London, with his most religious  
CONSORT.

MY LORD AND LADY,—Whoever have known the spirit and temper of worthy Dr Manton, appearing in his not-yet-forgotten life, and conspicuous in his never-to-be-forgotten writings, and do know anything of your temper and spirit, will not think it an incongruity that your names and his do thus stand together on the same page. Your lordship's high esteem and value of him, made public to the world, can reflect no dishonour upon you, either in your own judgment, or any man's that is a capable judge of persons and things. And your ladyship's kindness to his memory is even hereditary, descending to you from your worthy father, between whom and him there was so inward and continued a friendship as scarce ever hath been a greater, expressed by beneficence on the one part, and gratitude on the other.

And that an eminent servant of Christ, who, through the track of so many years, hath been so great and public a teacher, and example of the ancient, serious piety, righteousness, sobriety, strictness of manners, with most diffusive charity (for which London hath been renowned for some ages beyond most cities in the world), should have his memory revived by such a testimony from persons under your character, and who hold so public a station as you do in it, can never be thought unbecoming, as long as clearly explained and exemplified religion, solid, useful learning, and good sense, are in any credit in the world.

This volume will, as an addition to his many former most useful and most approved works that have gone before it, further, through God's blessing, contribute to the mending the world. And as it adds reputation to the author, so will the countenance you give it add to your own reputation. That it may also redound to your real and the common advantage is the cordial prayer of, my honoured lord and lady, your most faithful humble servant in Christ,

JOHN HOWE.

## THE PREFACE.

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CHRISTIAN READER,—The many volumes of sermons that come yearly from the press may in all probability incline some at first to apprehend that, as to what is here presented, the publisher might have spared his pains. But till we can find another Dr Manton, and performances like to his, there is no sense in the censure. Of many attempts in this kind, it had been wished they had proved abortive, there arising no credit to those concerned, nor benefit to the world; but the excellence of Dr Manton's sermons is so conspicuous, that none can attempt to detract from them, but it must be from ignorance or envy. Living and dying, he had that reputation for a king of preachers that hath been reached by few. Archbishop Usher was wont to say of him, that he was a voluminous preacher; not as if he was tedious for length, but because he had the art of reducing the substance of volumes of divinity into a narrow compass. Mr Charnock oft represented him as the best collector of sense of the age. And Dr Bates, in his sermon at his funeral, declares it with admiration, that though he was so very frequent in preaching, yet he was always superior to others, and equal to himself. Here are three substantial witnesses of undoubted credit; and he that won't confirm their testimony with his own (upon the perusal of his composures) manifestly shows he hath no gust. No man spun a more even thread through all his sermons, which are as much of a piece as can well be conceived; so that if any of them are valuable, they are all so; for the same spirit and sense, substance and warmth, is discernible in all of them. As for this volume, it hath nothing spurious, nothing unbecoming the author, nothing mean or trivial; but it contains several as valuable and useful discourses as any that have been already printed. And if any have given themselves the liberty to say, The doctor runs dregs (the best being culled out before, and these the refuse left), it is a sign they did not know him; nor is it doubted but a perusal of what is here offered will rectify their mistakes. These sermons were all transcribed from his own notes, and crave the reader's candour to give them that charitable allowance which is due to all posthumous works.

That light and love, knowledge and holiness, may be increased, and diffused more and more through this land and city, by all the labours of those whom Christ hath sent into his vineyard, is the hearty prayer of one of the meanest and unworthiest of them,

RICHARD STRETTON.



# SERMONS UPON EPHESIANS V.

## SERMON I.

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*—EPH. v. 1.

THIS chapter containeth several precepts concerning holiness of life. They are of two sorts ; some are general, and common to all christians ; others are special, and particularly suited to the condition and state of life they may be put into. The apostle beginneth with the common directions that belong universally to all christians ; and this is the first of them, ‘ Be ye therefore,’ &c.

There are two things in the words—

1. The precept, ‘ Be ye followers of God,’ *μιμηταί*, imitators or followers of his example ; for no English word is of a larger extent. They may be said to be followers of God who embrace the profession of his name, or the religion which he hath established. There are followers by way of adherence, and followers by way of resemblance.

2. The argument to enforce it, which is intimated in the words, ‘ as dear children.’ There is the relation, *τέκνα*, and the love consequent upon the relation, *ἀγαπητά*, because ye are God’s beloved children.

The doctrine is plain.

*Doct.* That christians should endeavour to resemble God as near as may be.

1. I shall show wherein we are to resemble God.

2. What provision God hath made for it.

3. I will prove it by reasons.

I. Wherein are we to resemble God ?

I answer—The context seemeth to restrain it to one particular thing, pardoning and forgiving the wrongs done us by others ; for it is said, ‘ therefore,’ as inferring it out of what was spoken before ; and that is what was said in Eph. iv. 32. ‘ Forgiving one another, as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.’ But it is usual to give general directions upon particular occasions, and therefore we need not confine our thoughts to that only ; and yet I will not enlarge the matter too much.

In scripture we are pressed to follow God in two things—in holiness and mercy ; as there is a twofold goodness of God, moral and beneficial ; his moral goodness is holiness, his beneficial goodness is benignity and mercy ; and in these two things are we pressed to follow him chiefly.

1. As for his moral goodness and holiness : Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' Implying that God's children must be like their Father, just and holy, doing wrong to none, but convincing the consciences of all of their sonship and adoption, or nearness to God. It pleaseth God often to leave his people in the midst of the enemies of the gospel, who will take occasion, by the uncircumspect carriage of believers, to vomit out their spite and malice against it ; therefore christians had need be exemplary in holiness.

2. The other thing wherein we are called upon to imitate God is in goodness to all, enemies not excepted : Mat. v. 44, 45, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.' Meaning thereby, that you yourselves will know or show yourselves to others to be children of your Father. The more kind and merciful you are, the more you are like him ; and ver. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect ;' compared with Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.' Which sheweth that mercy is one of the great divine perfections which we ought to imitate.

Well, then, let us now state the matter.

[1.] Negatively. This following and resembling of God standeth not in his natural, but moral perfections. God doth not say, Be ye strong, as I am strong, or, Be ye happy, as I am happy ; but, Be ye holy, as I am holy, merciful, as I am merciful. Our loss by sin is more in point of goodness than of power and knowledge. The devils exceed us in the two last, in power and knowledge, but have nothing of goodness. The impression of his goodness therefore is more necessary to us in our lapsed estate than of his knowledge and power. God is mighty in power ; therein we cannot imitate him, for we are poor weak creatures, and shall be so till we arrive at the state of blessedness and immortality ; but he is rich in mercy, and glorious in holiness ; in these things we must resemble him. He would teach us that moral perfections must be preferred before natural ; it is better to be wise than to be mighty, to be holy than to be wise. The bad angels, that have lost their holiness, have kept their strength and cunning. Nothing hath cost men dearer than striving to be like God in greatness and power rather than in goodness, holiness, and truth. It was Satan's temptation to our first parents : Gen. iii. 5, 'Ye shall be as gods ;' not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency. Therefore let us take heed of the first ambition of man to affect to be like God in power. It was the arrogancy of the king of Babylon to say, Isa. xiv. 14, 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High.' No, no ; moral excellences God would commend to us as deserving our best esteem from his own pattern.

[2.] Positively. The chiefest excellencies are—

(1.) His holiness. So we are to imitate God, who is a pure and holy being, and is also 'holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his



works,' Ps. cxlv. 17. So we must have a divine nature, and live and walk in a godlike manner: 'Be holy in all manner of conversation;' and live at the greatest distance from and abhorrence of sin as may be. That God is holy, his laws show it, which are very pure; his works show it, both internal on the heart of man: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The new man is created after God, and that causeth a giving back. When sin is propounded to us, we cannot easily bring the heart to it: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' By the seed of God he meaneth the nature of God, or that grace he puts into us. So also his external works, his punishing sin, especially in his own children. His severity in punishing is seen in the remarkable instances of his displeasure. Now we must hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth; for our nature doth most sensibly bewray itself by its affections, both of choice and aversion; and in some measure we must have the same nature that God hath.

(2.) His goodness; for 'God is love,' 1 John iv. 8. He showeth his benignity to all his creatures, but much more to us in our redemption by Christ. It was well observed by Æcolampadius in his lectures to the youth and children at Basil, that the ordinary pictures of God and the devil were no good books to instruct children in the nature of either. The truest representation that can be made of God would be to teach them what truth is, what love, mercy, and goodness is; and the truest picture of Satan would be to teach them the true characters of falsehood, malice, hatred, cruelty, envy. Well, then, we must imitate God in goodness.

Two acts there are of God's goodness—giving and forgiving.

(1st.) His giving, or bounty to all necessitous creatures, especially mankind, especially in their great necessities of guilt and misery, in providing so ample and suitable a remedy for them. Oh, what pity should this stir up in us to the bodies and souls of men, and make us ready to commiserate and do good to all, most especially to the household of faith! What hath God been doing on the theatre and stage of the world for almost six thousand years, but doing good? Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' And is this your Father, and will you not imitate him? Surely goodness should be the very constitution of our souls, and doing good the business of our lives.

(2d.) Forgiving. Some works of God are to be believed, not imitated, as the creation of the world; and some not only believed, but imitated, as the forgiving of sins. Our wrongs done to God are greater than the wrongs others do to us. Others owe us but pence, and we owe God talents; their debt to us is a hundred pence, and our debt to God is ten thousand talents, Mat. xviii. 24, 28. A talent is an hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings. Now God freely forgives all our offences; therefore we must forgive freely, fully, heartily, and that out of a sense of the Lord's kindness. However the world deal with you, and behave themselves towards you, do not you follow

them to do the like; for you are not to fashion yourselves according to this world, Rom. xii. 2; but 'be ye followers of God, as dear children.' And therefore you are not to reward evil with evil, but to do good, even to enemies. This is to be like God, at whose table all his enemies are maintained, and without whom they cannot subsist one moment.

II. What provision God hath made that we may be followers of him.

1. He hath given us his word to stamp his image upon our souls. We see much of his goodness in creation and providence, but not so much as we do in his word; nor in any part of his word so much as in his gospel: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' The image of God is on Christ primarily, and then on his seed, which representeth Christ to us, to beget holiness and love in us. God giveth his word, wherein there is so much discovered both of his love and holiness. The impression is according to the stamp. That which is hot communicateth heat; that which is cold, cold. Wit by communication causeth wit, and common learning common learning. So an holy and comfortable doctrine breedeth in us a spirit of holiness and goodness. There is much in the objects we are commonly conversant about.

2. He hath given us the example of Christ, or God in our nature, who came for this end and purpose, that we, who cannot fathom the unsearchable depth of the godhead, might see the divine perfections shining forth in the human nature of Christ, who was the character and express image of his divine glory: Heb. i. 3, Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26. And Christ came to represent the goodness of God, for he 'went about doing good,' Acts x. 38. They that cannot directly look on the sun may see the motion of it in a basin of water. To express an image, there must be similitude or likeness, and a means of deduction or conveying the likeness to us. Christ appeared in our nature to represent the amiableness of God, and to teach us a life of holiness.

3. He hath given us his Spirit to change us into the likeness of Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' For an objective cause will not work in us without some internal powerful cause to make it effectual, and that is the Spirit. None else is able to renew us to the image of God, there being such an averseness in man's heart, which cannot be cured by our bare thoughts.

III. I prove the point by these reasons—

1. This image of God was our primitive glory and excellency: Gen. i. 26, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' This was the ornament and crown of glory which God would put upon a creature, which was his masterpiece, and the most excellent of all his works. This made us amiable in the sight of God. In other creatures there was a *vestigium*, a footprint, or a track of his wisdom, power, and goodness; but in man there was an image or resemblance of his face. Now this was lost by sin; but to have it restored and recovered is the true glory of man, and the greatest excellency that we are capable of.

2. This is the effect of our new creation and regeneration; for it is



said, 2 Peter i. 4, that to 'us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature;' that is, have the image of God stamped upon us; and so christians might again begin to look like God himself, and in some measure resemble him in wisdom, goodness, and holiness. Nothing so like him as the new creature.

3. This is that which we hope shall be completed in heaven, and therefore it must be endeavoured here: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;' and Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;' that is, when I awake out of the sleep of death. The heaven that we look for is such a vision as maketh way for assimilation, and such an assimilation to God as maketh way for complete satisfaction and blessedness in him. All sight of God is transforming. That sight that we have of him in the gospel mortifieth sin; but that sight that we have of him in heaven nullifieth sin, and causeth a more perfect resemblance of him and likeness to him. And this must needs breed satisfaction, for beyond God there is nothing to be sought after; and if we be as God, so far as creatures are capable, we must needs be completely happy. Well, then, since we hope for this in heaven, the resemblance must be begun here; for God carrieth on his work by degrees, and doth dispose and fit us for that estate which he will translate us into. If we expect it hereafter, we must endeavour it now, and grow more like God every day; and the more we are so, the nearer we approach to our final perfection; as rivers widen themselves by degrees, till with a full mouth they run into the ocean.

4. We must not omit the argument of the text, 'as dear children;' wherein two things are considerable—(1.) The relation; (2.) The love that accompanieth it.

[1.] The relation. Ye are children. Children usually resemble their parents, either by nature, in the lineaments of their face, or by institution and education, in the quality of their minds. It may fail there, but it always holdeth good here; for none are God's children but those that are like him. It may fail there through many intervening accidents; they may neither be like their parents in the compass of their face, or in their nature and feature, nor in their manners and virtues. Many a worthy father may have a base degenerate child; and it is often observed that where there is an extraordinary excellency, there is as great a defect in the next descendant; as Solomon, who had so great a measure of wisdom and understanding, had a weak-hearted Rehoboam to his son. But it cannot fail here: if we be children of God, there is a resemblance between him and us; we will imitate our Father; for either the resemblance constituteth the relation, or else is the necessary effect of it. It constituteth it as we have a new being and an holy nature from him by regeneration, before we have *ἐξουσίαν*, the right, power, and dignity of his children: John i. 12, 13, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And it is the effect of it, as we resemble him in our lives and actions: 1 Peter i. 14-16, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves

according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, as I am holy.' And presently, in the 17th verse, 'If ye call on the Father,' &c. Well, then, our adoption into God's family calleth for a likeness between God and us. Good men may beget children no way like them; as under the law, though the father was circumcised, yet the child was born uncircumcised; they cannot propagate grace. Yea, where we are more at liberty, we may adopt children that may not answer expectation, but show themselves unthankful, and unworthy of favour; for men cannot put a towardliness into them. But God changeth and reneweth the heart, as well as adopteth. Therefore there should be, and will be, such a conformity between God and all his children that they plainly resemble him. I shall strengthen the argument by this additional notion, that in morals, he is accounted our father whom we imitate; as Gen. iv. 20, Jabal is said to be 'the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle;' that is, of all such as followed his course of life, whether they were lineally descended from him, yea or no. And ver. 21, Jubal is said to be 'the father of such as handle the harp and organ;' that is, the first inventor. So in matters spiritual, there are two sorts of children in the world, the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God are such as imitate God, and the children of the devil are such as have a satanical nature in them, and are like the devil: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and the father of it.' He is an envious, malicious, proud spirit, a cruel enemy of truth and goodness, and whosoever imitateth him in this is a child of the devil; as the apostle calleth Elymas the sorcerer: Acts xiii. 10, 'Oh, full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness!' On the other side, the children of God are such as are influenced by God, and imitate God in all purity and goodness. Now there should be a broad and manifest difference between the children of God and of the devil, 1 John iii. 10; therefore as children be followers of God.

2. The love that accompanieth and goeth along with this relation, 'As dear children.'

[1.] There was a great deal of love showed in giving us our new nature in regeneration, and taking us into so near a relation to himself as that of children: 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' 'Behold' serveth sometimes to excite our faith, that we may believe the certainty of things so strange and unusual; sometimes our wonder and reverence, that we may consider the worth and value of them. Be it for one end or other, surely it is a great grace and favour that he would take such poor creatures into his family, that God will be our own Father, and look upon us as his own children. All is from love, great love, which we may admire, but cannot sufficiently express. Now this love should beget love in us again; we should love him and own him as our Father; and what will follow? Love will beget *studium imitandi*, and endeavour to be like him in benignity and holiness; for we love him not only as a good God, but as a holy God.



*Object.* But you will say, If I knew that he did thus love me, and had adopted me to this grace, this might the sooner be done. I answer.—

(1.) He maketh you the offer of this privilege, as great as it is, and it is your fault if you do not apply it and make it your own. The terms are gracious enough: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

(2.) God hath a title to our dearest love before we can assure a title to his choicest benefits. He made you out of nothing, provided a saviour for you without your thought or asking, hath offered pardon and life to all that will accept of it in and with Christ to gospel ends. Now this should attract and draw our love to him. Our first motive to love God is not the persuasion of his special love to us, but the tendering of the new covenant, the offered happiness by Christ: 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 'To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

(3.) The more this prevaileth with you to endeavour to be like God, the more you see you have an interest in his dearest love, and that he is your Father, and you his children in the most comfortable sense; that is, that you not only desire, but are in possession of his fatherly love: Rom. viii. 29, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Therefore at first you must not ask questions, and put off your duty by scruples, but set to the performance of it, and you will best get rid of them.

[2.] There is a great love and tenderness exercised towards those that are in this relation. They are his 'dear children,' and they shall know it by his fatherly dealing with them; they are reconciled, pardoned, and justified, and God is not severe upon their failings: Mal. iii. 17, 'I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' They have his Spirit sent into their hearts, to keep afoot God's interest there, and maintain the comfort of their adoption: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' They are also under the special care of his providence for protection and provision, especially that all things may work together for their final perfection and happiness. O christians! methinks it should melt your hearts to consider how the dearness and tenderness of God's love is expressed in the gospel towards his children. Now, then, shall not all this have a due impression upon you? Filial duty should answer fatherly love. Who should be so ready to serve and please him as his dear children? Yea, now we do not press you so much to serve him as to be like him. There are duties which signify inferiority and subjection, and we are not exempted from them, but should readily perform what our Father calleth for in this kind; but there are other things which are our perfection, as wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth; these advance our nature, do not depress it, because it is godlike to excel in these things; and this we now press you to.

[3.] The more like to God we are, the more dear we are to him, and the more amiable in his sight; so that you are not only *dilecti*, but

*diligibiles*, not only loved, but lovely, or fit to be loved ; for the Lord taketh pleasure in his own image wrought by his Spirit in our hearts : Ps. xi. 7, ' For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright ; ' Prov. xi. 20, ' But such as are upright in their way are his delight ; ' 1 Peter iii. 4, ' A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. ' A holy creature is an object suited to the complacency of his holiness. God doth delight in us as redeemed and pardoned, for his own mercy endeareth us to him : ' Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning ? ' Zech. iii. 2. But no one reason doth exclude another. He doth delight in us also as sanctified ; that was our primitive amiableness, and the loss of it was our state of enmity to God, when he could take no pleasure in us. Therefore, the more we recover the image and nature of God our heavenly Father, the dearer we are to him. He had a benevolence, a good will, or pity to us in our sins ; but his complacency in us is as we are renewed and sanctified ; yea, the more we are so, the dearer to him.

[4.] Our chief worship of God consists in imitation ; not in contemplation or admiration only, or in bare praise and adoration, but in imitation, when we study to be like him. Other things are necessary, but they are means for this end, that there may be a greater conformity between us and God, and so a communion with him. Other things are good in themselves, but without this they are not accepted. For instance, one great part of worship is to admire God, to which we are often directed in scripture : ' Who is a God like unto thee ? ' This admiration will break out into praise ; for when the heart is big with thoughts, it cannot hold : Ps. l. 23, ' He that offereth praise glorifieth me. ' It is questionless a great duty to praise God for his excellencies, for how shall we be affected with things that we do not frequently remember ? But yet there is something more to be done than to wonder and praise, and that is to imitate ; and this is true religion, to imitate what we worship. By the admiration and commemoration of God, or by the acts of adoration in wonder and praise, there may be some loose and inconstant effects left upon our hearts ; as to fear him, when for the time we remember his greatness and justice ; or to have some delight stirred in us for the present, when we remember his goodness and mercy. But alas ! these transitory acts, though good in their kind, yet are not to be compared with that impression of God which becometh as a habit and holy nature in us, which is the constant principle of holy spiritual operation. It is good to think of God often ; particular thoughts have their use. It is good to speak of God, and praise God often, not only for his benefits, but his excellencies. Religion lieth much in it. But all these acts are but means to this end, that we may be like God, so far as is agreeable to our created state and capacity, and so far as is necessary to our communion with him. If you admire and approve of a good man, if you do not endeavour to imitate him, you do not give him that respect which his virtues call for. Translate the matter to God, and the same reason will hold good. If you admire the perfections of his nature, praise him for his excellencies, bless him for his benefits ; but the likeness of him is not impressed upon your souls so as to become the constant principle of your operations ; you do indeed use the means in your way and



manner, but you do not obtain the end. Shall I tell you by a plain enumeration what I intend? The knowledge of God is necessary to rectify the world; there it beginneth. The belief of what we know is also necessary to beget true religion, for knowledge without faith leaveth us but convinced infidels: Heb. xi. 6, 'But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' But doth it rest there? No; we must esteem what we do believe. David calleth God his 'exceeding joy,' Ps. xliii. 4. And what further? We must praise what we esteem: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' But must we rest there in worshipping and praising him? No; all this leadeth to a further end, that there may be a likeness and resemblance between God and us, that we be holy as he is holy, and merciful as he is merciful; otherwise our knowledge is but a cold form, our faith but a dead opinion, our esteem is but a naked approbation, our praise is but an empty compliment; for how can we glorify God heartily for such perfections as we like not, or have no mind unto ourselves, and of which we are capable, and should seek after?

[5.] My last reason is, because we are appointed for this end, and serve for this use, that wherever we come, we may call God to mind, and bring him into remembrance with all those with whom we do converse. All creatures serve for this use, that they may represent God to the thoughts of men by that life and being which they have. But because this is a common thing, and not very apt in itself to awaken the stupid world to any reverence and regard of God, as children cannot be said to call their parents to the minds of others by eating and drinking, which are acts common to them, and the children of all other parents, but by some special properties, wherein they resemble their progenitors; so though all creatures in their kind may represent God, and awaken the thoughts of the drowsy world to remember him, yet because this is generally overlooked, or doth very imperfectly discover God, therefore he hath chosen out some among mankind that may more expressly show forth his divine excellencies and perfections to the world. And for this use serve the saints, who are his witnesses to declare the truth and excellency of his being, and to alarm the consciences of a godless and wicked generation to remember God: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' What we read in the text 'the praises,' is in the margin *τὰς ἀρετὰς*, the virtues of God. Now the virtues and praises of God are his divine attributes, especially such as are communicable to men, as his wisdom, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, goodness. Christians should show these forth, and keep the world in awe of God by the majesty and beauty of their conversations. Alas! if we should speak well of God, it would do the world little good as to the cure of their atheism and infidelity, unless our deeds confess him as well as our words. What will the world say? They speak at a higher rate than we do; but what is there worthy, noble, and godlike in their conversations more than we express? Therefore you do not discharge your duty, and effectually

represent God to the world, till you are followers of him ; nay, rather you give them cause to doubt that all is sophistry and pretence, while you pretend to a greater nearness to God, and show forth nothing like him or worthy of him.

*Use.* Is to persuade us to be followers or imitators of God. Shall God give us his word and works, and shall the Son of God come in the likeness of men, and live under the same law we are bound to, and shall not men make it their design to be every day more like God, and to be such in the world as the Son of God was in the world ? Alas ! how uncomfortably else will you live, and with little honour to God, yea, apparently to his disgrace, when you are his children by profession, and give an ill character of him to the world ! Now to this end—

1. Get a due conception of God. Some have not a due apprehension of the mercy of God, and entertain needless jealousies of him, as one that watcheth all opportunities to destroy us, and will be severe to his creatures. This is a blasphemy against his holy and gracious nature. No ; Micah vii. 18, ‘Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.’ Others conceit ill of his holiness, and so live securely in their sins : Ps. l. 21, ‘Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.’ The gods of the heathen taught sin by their own example ; their impure lives, recorded by the poets, were a great means to debauch the world. Augustine ad Nect. telleth us of a young man that was enticed to wantonness by seeing a picture of Jupiter on the wall committing adultery. Men could not sin so freely if they did believe the holiness of God’s nature, and his resolved displeasure against sin and sinners. We think God like ourselves, and that he is more indulgent to the impurities of men than is commonly believed, and so transform God into an idol of our own fancy. These propagate their ill conceits of God, while they pretend to be God’s people, and yet walk loosely. As the heathen gods are represented to be lascivious as goats, drunken like swine, revengeful and furious like wolves and bears, and so are a stain to the godhead, and lessened man’s natural reverence of the divine power and majesty ; so do evil christians, if they be so, pollute his name : Ezek. xxxvi. 20, ‘And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went out, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of the land.’

2. Esteem these things as amiable. We can neither praise, nor love, nor imitate, what we do not esteem. Is holiness the glory of God ? and will you either scorn it in others, or neglect to get it yourselves ? Is justice and mercy good, a perfection in the divine nature ? and will you get such a blot or blemish as to make no conscience of them, of paying your debts, or doing good to the poor and needy ? Fy ! fy ! change your religion, or walk more answerably. You talk of being christians, be good heathens first ; they had a conscience of these things. There is a reflection on God when christians allow themselves in dissolute immoralities.

3. Desire God to change your natures, that you may bear the image of the heavenly one, 1 Cor. xv. 49. We cannot follow God in our lives



till we are made partakers of the divine nature. Apply yourselves to Christ in the use of his appointed means for the renewing of your natures.

4. Bewail your imperfections, and come nearer to your pattern every day: 'I press towards the mark,' Phil. iii. 14; and what is a christian's σκῆπτρὸς, or mark? Exact holiness as well as complete felicity. Therefore be constantly intent upon this business; it is not a thing that must be left to chance, but it must be your great design, and the purpose and daily business of your lives.

## SERMON II.

*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*

—EPH. v. 2.

HERE is the second direction for an holy life, 'To walk in love,' as Christ hath given us an example. In the former verse he exhorteth them to imitate God, in this, to imitate Christ.

In the words observe—

First, The duty enforced, 'Walk in love.'

Secondly, The reason to enforce it, which is taken from the example of Christ's love, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Christ's love to us is both a motive and a pattern.

1. A motive, *because* he hath loved us, and reconciled us to God.

2. A pattern, *as* he hath loved us. In some proportional degree our love should answer his love. It is both ways propounded in scripture. As a motive: 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' As a pattern: John xiii. 34, 'Love one another, as I have loved you;' and John xv. 12, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Now that we may the better discern the force of this motive, and the completeness of this pattern, let us see how the apostle representeth and setteth it forth to us, 'As Christ also hath loved us.' Observe here—

[1.] The principle, 'As Christ also hath loved us.'

[2.] The act and instance of his love to us, 'And given himself for us.'

[3.] The end and intent, 'For an offering and a sacrifice unto God.'

[4.] The fruit and effect, 'For a sweet-smelling savour.'

*Doct.* That Christ showed so much love in giving himself for a propitiatory sacrifice to God for us, that thereby all true christians are bound to walk in love.

1. Let me open the example and pattern which is here set before us.

2. Show you what it is to walk in love.

3. How we are bound to do so by the example of Christ's love.

I. To open the example here set before us. And there I begin—

1. With the principle, 'Christ also loved us.' That was it which moved and inclined him to so strange an undertaking as to die for our sins. Christ's coming into the world for our redemption is sometimes made an act of obedience, and sometimes an act of love; of obedience to God, and love to us. Of obedience to God: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous.' There his whole undertaking, or what he did, living and dying, is called obedience. So Phil. ii. 7, 'He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' At other times it is made an act of love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Rev. i. 5, 'Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' He thought no price too dear for our salvation. Now these two do not clash the one with the other. It doth not cease to be an act of obedience because it is an act of love, nor to be an act of love because it is an act of obedience. Christ hath reconciled this matter to our thoughts by his own words: John x. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father.' Christ was a free agent; this work was not forced upon him, but he yielded to it by a voluntary dispensation, or upon agreement, in obedience to his Father; and so at the same time he commendeth his love to sinners, and obeyeth the will of God in the discharge of his office. This was then the principle or internal moving cause.

2. The act, 'He gave himself for us.' Where you have the giver, the gift, and the parties interested.

[1.] The giver, Christ. He voluntarily first assumed a body, and then parted with his life for this use.

[2.] The gift was himself. And both put together show that Christ was both priest and sacrifice; as God the priest, as man the sacrifice: Heb. ix. 14, 'He offered up himself to God through the eternal Spirit.' Under the law the priests and the sacrifices were distinct; but our Lord Jesus was both the priest offering and the sacrifice offered. In his person he was the priest offering, and his human nature was the thing offered. Every priest must have somewhat to offer; and when the great high priest comes, he must offer something beyond what was offered before, that the worthiness of the sacrifice and the dignity of the priest may suit and well agree together. What did Christ then offer? Heb. x. 5, 'When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.' And therefore it is added, Heb. x. 10, 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' So that he gave himself, his body, his flesh, for the life of the world, John vi. 51.

[3.] The parties interested, 'for us.' It was for our sake, that God might pardon our sins, and bring about our salvation in a way most convenient for God's glory and our peace. Now Christ's death was a proper and convenient means—(1.) To demonstrate God's justice and holiness, that he doth hate sin, and will certainly punish it, if it be not taken away in the manner God hath prescribed in his new covenant founded in the death of Christ: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. (2.) To vindicate the honour



of his government and law. God's authority was violated by man's transgression; his law was holy and just, and our obedience reasonable. Now to keep up his authority, God would not dispense with the penalties of his law till Christ died for us: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' (3.) To be a warning to sinners, not to sin presumptuously, and slight and despise the majesty of God: Rom. viii. 3, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' God hath put a brand upon sin. (4.) To declare the greatness of his love to us, in procuring our pardon and life at so dear a rate: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

3. The end, set forth by two notions, 'An offering and a sacrifice to God.' The first word, *προσφορά*, is a general word for anything offered to God; *θυσία*, sacrifice, the other word, is more limited, for all the offerings were not called sacrifices. Or, if you will, take the distinction between these two words thus. 'Offering' implieth things without life, and 'sacrifice' referreth to living creatures. The one referreth to the fruits of the earth that were offered to God, and the other to beasts that were slain; but whatever was offered to God was to be consumed, even such things as were destitute of life, as the meat-offering was to be burnt with fire, Lev. ii. 1, 2. Living creatures were to be killed, and the blood offered upon the altar; for the apostle telleth us, Heb. ix. 22, 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.' We must understand the blood of some living thing that was sacrificed for freeing a person from guilt and obligation to punishment. Well, then, all these things presignified Christ's death and bloody sufferings; 'For he gave himself to be an offering and sacrifice to God.'

This notion puts us in mind of several things.

[1.] Of our misery; for we have sins whereby we are liable to death, otherwise what needed there a sacrifice to be offered for us? There is no need of a reconciliation where there is no breach, nor a propitiation where there is no offence, nor of a sacrifice where there is no sin to be expiated and taken away.

[2.] It puts us in mind of the mercy of God in Christ, who gave his Son for us, not only to be the high priest of our profession, but also to be our sacrifice: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'

[3.] It puts us in mind of the manner of our redemption, by a sin-offering, or a propitiatory sacrifice: Isa. liii. 10, 'When he shall make his soul an offering for sin;' 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us.' Before sin can be taken away, there must be a propitiatory sacrifice, and such as God will accept as a full satisfaction for sin, so that he is fully content; and as to a sacrifice and suffering for sin, there needeth to be no more done. Well, then, here is the true notion of Christ's death, that it is a mediatorial sacrifice, not a thank-offering, but a sin-offering made by Christ, by his condescending to a shameful accursed death for our sakes.

4. The efficacy of this sacrifice is intimated in the last words, *εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας*, 'for a sweet-smelling savour.' The scripture speaketh

of God after the manner of men. Now men are delighted with sweet odours; therefore, to show the satisfaction God took in the propitiatory sacrifices offered to him, they are represented in scripture as a sweet odour to him; as in the sacrifices of Noah it is said, Gen. viii. 21, 'And the Lord smelled a sweet savour;' in the Hebrew it is 'a savour of rest.' So Lev. i. 9, 'An offering made by fire, of a sweet savour to the Lord;' which cannot be meant of nidor, or the fulsome smoke of burnt flesh, but must be understood metaphorically, of God's gracious acceptance of the required duties. So proportionably we may conceive of this meritorious and acceptable sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A sweet savour refresheth, comforteth, and quieteth the sense when it is disturbed and offended with an ill scent; so this sacrifice pleased God, and appeased his wrath towards us. God was offended by our sins, and his wrath is pacified by Christ's sacrifice or dying for us, as the disturbed sense is quieted and appeased by a good savour. But we need not labour so much about the phrase as about the thing.

To clear it, that God is well pleased with Christ's offering up himself for us, I prove it—

[1.] From the dignity of his person: Acts xx. 28, 'Which he hath purchased with his own blood.' It was the blood of God; the eternal Word was made flesh out of love to sinful man, and assumed this flesh into the unity of his person, as we reckon the fruit of the graft to the stock; and so we call it 'the blood of God.' Therefore, of what rare virtue, causality, and influence must that sacrifice be which was made of the body and blood of Christ, who was God? He was the highest and greatest priest that ever could be, and he offered the best and greatest sacrifice that ever was, a sacrifice of an infinite dignity and value, even that flesh and blood which was assumed into his own person, the dignity of which added an infinite value and price to it.

[2.] From the merit of his obedience. Christ's suffering death for the sin of man, upon the command of his Father, was the noblest piece of service, and the highest degree of obedience that ever was or could be performed to God by man or angels. There was in it so much love to God, and pity to man, so much self-denial, humility, and patience, such resignation of himself to God, who appointed him to be the redeemer of mankind, and to do this great service for them, that it is impossible it can be paralleled. That it was an evident act of obedience, I showed before; he was obedient to the death; his death was an act of the greatest humility, charity, patience, faith, obedience. What would you have more to increase the value of the merit?

[3.] The greatness of his sufferings. If he suffered the punishment which sin had made our due, nothing could be added to pacify the wrath of God. The punishment of the sinner is either of loss or pain, the desertion or the curse; and therefore he is said to 'bear our griefs, and to carry our sorrows, and to be wounded for our iniquities,' Isa. liii. 4, 5; 'He was made sin for us;' that is, penally handled, and died for us, 2 Cor. v. 21; 'He was made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13. Thus roundly doth the scripture express it: 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,' Rom. viii. 32. He put him to grief, not out of hatred to him, but love to our salvation. Hence came those agonies of Christ, and prayers, and tears, and strong cries, Heb. v. 7. Now these things do all increase the value of the sacrifice.



[4.] God hath declared himself satisfied, and hath approved the sacrifice which he offered for us ; and therefore our sin cannot make us loathsome and unsavoury to God, and stir up his wrath against us, but that we have ground of hope, yea, of sure confidence, that he hath smelled a sweet savour of rest, and his wrath is appeased, and that he hath accepted the sacrifice offered by our redeemer. There is no more necessary for paying the price and ransom for our souls ; for God, the most just judge, would not accept of an imperfect satisfaction, or give testimony that he was well pleased with it.

But how do we know that God hath accepted it ? Partly by Christ's rising from the dead, which is not only an evidence of the truth and dignity of his person, but of the fulness of his ransom, and perfectness of his satisfaction ; for would a just judge deliver a debtor or his surety from prison unless full payment had been made ? Would God, who is the just judge of the world, who had appointed Christ to die for our sins, raise him from the dead if he had not done his work ? Christ's resurrection is expressed in scripture as the letting our surety out of prison : Isa. liii. 8, 'He was taken from prison, and from judgment ;' Acts ii. 24, 'Whom God hath raised up, and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.' He hath loosed the bands of the grave : Heb. xiii. 20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. ; as the apostles would not come forth, but were solemnly brought forth by the magistrates, Acts xvi. 28, 29. And partly because he was not only raised from the dead, but ascended into heaven with glory and honour : 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Received up into glory.' He was not taken out of prison only, but rewarded, which still sheweth that his work is perfected. Partly because, upon the account of his full satisfaction, he had made a covenant wherein he hath offered to the world reconciliation with God, and the everlasting fruition of him in glory upon gracious terms : Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' The legal exclusion is taken off ; remission of sins is the first gift, and blessedness the second : Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.' And partly also because he hath procured the Spirit whereby this covenant may be attested and made effectual : Acts ii. 33, 'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear ;' Acts v. 32, 'And ye are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' All these are assurances to the world that their peace is made, so far as a sacrifice is needful to make it, and that God is well pleased with what he hath done for the redemption of mankind.

II. The nature of the duty thence inferred, or what it is to 'walk in love.' To walk in love signifieth not one act or two, but the perpetual tenor of our lives ; our whole life should be an exercise of love.

But what love doth he mean ? Either love to God and Christ, or love to men ? I answer—I cannot exclude the former totally, for these reasons—

1. Love to men is of little worth unless it flow from love to God. And the apostle John, who placeth so much weight on our love to the

brethren, sheweth that this evidence must be resolved into an higher : 1 John v. 2, 'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.' So that our love to the people of God will not argue our sincerity unless it be founded and rooted in our sincere love to God, and a single evidence will not establish our comfort.

2. Because it is a genuine product of this great love of Christ to us : 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he loved us first.' The first impression of the love of Christ upon our hearts begets a love to God again. To God himself ; we beat back his own beam and flame upon himself first, and then to all that belong to him.

Now for these reasons I dare not totally exclude this sense. I may add a third—

3. Because not only the direct improvement of the love of Christ, but so much of the christian life dependeth on the love of God, that it should not be excluded when we are discoursing of it : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' The sense of this love should work in us certainly a great fervour of love to God, that may level and direct all our actions to his glory, and make us study to please him.

Well, then, if we take it in this sense, how are we to walk in love ? I answer—

1. That love is to be at the bottom of all our actions and duties, that our whole religion may be but an acting of love : 1 Cor. xvi. 14, 'Let all your things be done with charity.' If we pray, let us act the seeking love ; if we praise God, let us act the delighting love ; if we obey God, let us act the pleasing love. Whatever we do, let it be influenced by love and gratitude, which is the life of the soul, and the heart of our religion.

2. Let us walk in love, all will be nothing else ; but let us continue constant to the death in the profession of the christian faith ; for vehement pure christian love casteth out all fear in danger. If we love Christ, we will run all hazards for his sake, make no scruple to die or undergo any danger for Christ, thereby imitating the love of Christ to us, like unto those in Rev. xii. 11, that 'loved not their lives to the death.' When self-love is overcome by a greater love, men will neither be persuaded nor frightened out of a love of themselves ; it must be another more powerful love that must draw them from it, as one nail driveth out another. Now this can be nothing else but the love of God and of Christ, which if it be once shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we shall lay all things at Christ's feet, we shall suffer all things, and endure all things, and give up self, and strength, and time, and estate, and life itself for his glory. What is nearer to us than ourselves ? and what will break the force of natural inclinations but this great love ?

But the context seemeth to restrain this to the love of man, for it hath a respect to the former precept and direction. Now then we must inquire what it is to walk in love by the example of Christ's dying, not for friends, but enemies, as all the world were to God when he took their business in hand.



1. That there must be such an impression of the love of Christ upon us, that love to mankind may be the very habit and constitution of our souls. Love must dwell, and bear rule, and have dominion in our hearts, before it can be expressed in our lives: Col. iii. 14, 'And above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.' This love to others, founded in Christ's love to us, and all others, even his enemies, will cement the disagreeing parts of the world together for common good, and keep them united to one another in an indissoluble bond, much more perfectly than any other obligation can do. But alas! where shall we find this christian charity, which is a true transcript of Christ's love to us, even among God's people, to God's people, who take little care of working together for the common good, but employ our parts and abuse our esteem for grace to one another's prejudice?

2. That showing love to others should be the business of our lives, and whatever we do towards them, we should do it in love, being as diligent to promote their good as our own, and as tender of their interests as our own, and, in short, loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is a hard lesson, but we must frame ourselves to learn it, or else it will fare ill with us in the judgment; for wilfully to break or neglect any one of Christ's known commands is not consistent with sincerity. Therefore we must live in this mutual love, and it must be a Christ-like love, patient and humble, and diligent to procure and promote the good of those whom we love. But moral things are best known by their opposites. They that sin against it are—

[1.] Self-seekers and self-pleasers, that are wholly taken up with their own things: Phil. ii. 21, 'For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' These cannot bear with others, because they wholly seek their own contentments, and not another's good; whereas, if they did love others as themselves, as they would do no hurt to others, so they should bear with their infirmities; for 'Charity beareth all things,' 1 Cor. xiii. 7. There is none of us but can bear with a great many faults in ourselves, and would be borne with in them by others also. Use the same measure in buying and selling.

[2.] Those that are proud and contentious, and full of strife for nothing; whereas if we did cherish that humility and modesty which becometh people conscious to so many infirmities as we are, we should not break love for a little disrespect. A proud man sets too high a price and value upon himself, and is angry when others will not come up to his price, and value him so inordinately as he doth himself: Prov. xiii. 10, 'Only by pride cometh contention; but with the well-advised is wisdom.' The modest and humble have no great expectations, are content that others go before them; but the proud take it ill that all others entertain not their conceits of themselves; they expect so much, that none about them can answer their expectations; therefore pride is the great incendiary of the world in societies, churches, families, and neighbourhood.

[3.] Worldly men. Greedy dogs fall out about the carrion, which every one desireth to feed on, and would exclude others. The whole world is not wide enough for ambitious and covetous men; they enlarge their desires, and would have what another hath; and therefore fall

out with them, because they would shine alone in the earth : Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.'

[4.] Impatient men ; for passionate persons are like fine glasses, broken as soon as touched ; the least injury is enough to break them all in pieces. But is this to be like Christ, who was meek, and lowly, and endured the contradiction of sinners, and has bidden us to learn of him ? Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest to your souls.'

[5.] The lazy and backward to do good : 2 Thes. iii. 13, 'But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.' A christian's daily business is to promote the good of others, and to seek out all occasions of usefulness. If a heathen could say, *Diem perdidi*—I have lost a day, surely a christian should count that day lost in which he hath not done some good.

III. I come now to show you how we are bound to do so by the example of Christ's love. And here I shall show you that it is both a motive and a pattern.

1. It is a motive to excite us to love him, because the great thing that is remarkable in Christ's giving himself as a sacrifice for us is love.

You may conceive it by these considerations—

[1.] To suffer for another is more than to do or act for him, for therein is more self-denial. In doing a good turn for another, we only bestow our labour ; but in suffering for them, we hazard our interest, yea, life and limb ; therefore we more oblige others when we are willing to incur damage for them, than in doing an act of kindness for them. The soldier that held up to Augustus the stump of his arm, having lost his hand in battle for him, thought that action had much of merit and obligation in it ; and Peter thought he expressed great love to Christ when he told him, John xiii. 37, 'I will lay down my life for thy sake.' Oh, then what love hath Christ showed us, who would become not only a surety, but a sacrifice for our sake !

[2.] To suffer death for another is the greatest obligation that we can put upon him : John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' This is the greatest evidence that can be ; he speaketh this to make his example the more binding. This depriveth us of a capacity to enjoy those for whom we suffer.

[3.] This is the highest expression of love to friends, but Christ did it for enemies, for the ungodly sinful world : Rom. v. 7, 8, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die ; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Here are three sorts of men, the wicked, the righteous, or a man of a rigid innocency, and the good and bountiful man ; but now we were in the lowest class.

[4.] To suffer for the faults of another is the greatest condescension. A naughty man may be innocent in some cases, and it is much to die for him out of love to justice, and to maintain his innocency ; but for



Christ to 'be made sin for us, who knew no sin,' 2 Cor. v. 21, to be reckoned or numbered among transgressors, this is inestimable love.

[5.] Because this is not fit to be done among mankind, that the innocent should suffer capital punishment for the nocent. God would represent this in the beasts, to show his sovereignty over them, where the innocent creature was set apart for this use to bear man's sin: Lev. xvi. 21, 22, 'And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.' And the blood of the beast was given on God's altar to make atonement: Lev. xvii. 6, 'And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the Lord.' This was thoroughly accomplished in our Redeemer: Dan. ix. 26, 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;' Isa. liii. 4-6, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and he was wounded for our transgressions, and was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' 1 Peter iii. 18, 'He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' This was the wonderful act of God's grace to find such a strange and unusual sacrifice for us.

[6.] That he should suffer to such ends, or that the consequent benefits should be so great, as the remission of sins and eternal life. Remission of sin we have Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' The second, eternal life, we have Heb. v. 9, 'He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' Both together we have Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Sin is the greatest evil, the makebate or cause of difference between us and God, and eternal life is the greatest happiness that we are capable of.

[7.] That, with respect to the end, God and Christ took such pleasure in it: Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief;' John x. 17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.' The Father is so well pleased with the reconciliation of lost sinners, that he loveth Christ for undertaking and performing it. So Christ was satisfied: Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' He solaced himself with the thoughts of it: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' He delighted to appear in human shape, and longed for its accomplishment, and patiently submitted to it.

2. It is a pattern which we should imitate.

[1.] In the reality of it: 1 John iii. 18, 'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.' As Christ did not: Gal. i. 4, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.'

[2.] In the freeness of it. He was not induced to it by any overture from us, but by his own love only: Eph. v. 25, 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.'

[3.] In the constancy of it. He was not discouraged when it came to push of pike: John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end.'

[4.] In the self-denial and condescension of it: Mat. xx. 28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He chose not a life of pomp and ease, not a delightful flesh-pleasing course of life, but a mean and low estate, and ignominious sufferings. Ease and stateliness and lordly pre-eminence should be far from the disciples of Christ. He came not in the pomp and equipage of an earthly prince. Strife for pre-eminence little becometh us, but who shall be most useful to bring home most souls to God. But because we cannot pursue all, two things I shall commend to you from this love of Christ—

(1.) The kind of the love; it was a love to souls. If Christ gave himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to reconcile and recover them to God, we should have a higher value and esteem for them. Before Christ died, men could not sufficiently understand of what precious account souls were; but now, unless we shut our eyes, we may see plainly that the redemption of the soul is precious: Ps. xlix. 8, 'The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.' If a man find a pearl of great price, and, not knowing what it is, maketh no more esteem of it than of a piece of glass or a common bead, and is ready to sell it for a few pence, but upon the offer of it to a skilful lapidary, who at first sight biddeth two or three thousand crowns for it, would he not change his mind, and think this jewel is of greater value than he took it to be? So here; man knows not the value of the soul, and did not greatly set by it. Adam lost his own soul and the souls of all his posterity for an apple, and we sell the birthright for a mess of pottage; but when Christ, who made souls, and knoweth the value of them, came to recover lost souls, he gave himself for us; hereby he taught us to set a higher price upon them, for nothing but his precious blood could redeem them; and therefore we should not despise our own souls, so as to forfeit them for base unworthy trifles. So for the souls of others; if any of us be induced to show charity to the bodies of others, but little regard their souls, I should think ill of them. We pity a man that should be famished to death for want of what we can give him, but we do not pity a man that is going to hell, and is ready to perish eternally. There is little of the bowels of Christ found among most christians. Or if we pity them, and wish it were otherwise with them, yet we do little or nothing to pull them out of the fire; yea, though many times they are nearly related to us, we are loath sometimes to be at the trouble of a little serious exhortation, or hearty and christian advice; the ease of the flesh checketh us. Is this to walk in love as Christ loved us? Or it may be we will not venture the hazard of a scorn or mock, or the displeasure of a carnal friend. Christ gave up himself and all the interests of that life he had assumed for the good of souls. We shall never do any great things, nor honour God in our relations, till we have a love to souls fixed in our hearts, till we have



the bowels of Christ : Phil. i. 8, 'For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' Christ thought the gain of souls recompense enough for his ignominious death.

(2.) The next thing is the greatness and degree of this love. Let us be ready to lay down our lives for the church of God : 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' We must imitate Christ in this, in his dying to reduce men to God. It is not left arbitrary; we must and ought.

(1st.) There must be a venturing and hazarding life. That may be done in many cases, as for the conversion of the carnal world, in which we may carry our lives in our hands : Phil. ii. 17, 'Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.' Or though it involve you in great trouble to relieve their necessities, visit them in prison; or to rescue the life of another from an assassin, or when another is assaulted by thieves and ruffians, to prevent murder.

(2d.) There must be certain death; as when a single person dies for a community, a private person for a more public or more useful person, as a subject to save his prince; or when we lose a temporal good for another's eternal good; as the apostle : Rom. ix. 1-3, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.' Some will not hazard a scorn, a check, or frown, or scoff for them.

Use 1. This love of Christ must be firmly believed. Let us not look on the death of Christ only as a tragical story and the sufferings of an innocent person, or only believe the history of his death; but let us believe that he died a sacrifice for us, out of love to our souls, to redeem us to God, and save us from wrath.

Use 2. It must be closely applied for our good and benefit, till we are duly affected with it, so as to make suitable returns to God; partly by devoting ourselves to him : Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and partly by rendering our thank-offerings of charity towards others : Heb. xiii. 17, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

### SERMON III.

*But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.—EPH. v. 3.*

In the words observe—

1. The things forbidden. Three sins are enumerated, 'Fornication,' and 'All uncleanness,' and 'Covetousness.'

2. The manner and degree of forbidding, 'Let them not be once named among you.' Christians should have such a perfect abhorrence for these things, that they should be as things unknown and unheard of in the church.

3. The reason of this prohibition, 'As becometh saints.'

*Doct.* That there lieth a great obligation on christians to keep themselves at the greatest distance from, and abhorrence of, all impurity and uncleanness.

1. I shall fix the due sense of the words.

2. Show what purity and cleanness of heart belongeth to christians.

3. Show the special impurity that there is in these kind of sins.

I. To fix the sense. The things forbidden are expressed by three words—

1. 'Fornication,' which signifieth the unchastity of persons in a single or unmarried estate, which was looked upon among the gentiles as a thing indifferent, and no sin; and some of the christians newly crept out of gentilism thought it a light and venial fault, as at Corinth, 1 Cor. vi. from ver. 12 to the end. They thought that as eating all sorts of meat without distinction was lawful, so promiscuous copulation. To disprove this evil conceit, the apostle answereth by way of concession concerning meats, by way of correction concerning fornication, ver. 13.

[1.] By way of concession concerning meats: 'Meat is for the belly, and the belly is for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them;' that is to say, it is true that meats were made to fill the belly, and the belly to receive meats for the sustentation of life during the present state; but God will cause both the need and the use to cease in the life of glory.

[2.] By way of correction concerning fornication.

(1.) But now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body; namely, the end and use of the body is to serve the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. The Lord Jesus is also Lord of the body, seeing he gave himself not only for the redemption of the soul, but of the body also, and will raise it up at the last day, ver. 14; therefore it is to be disposed of according to his will. Therefore fornication is contrary to the use of the body, as the body is for the Lord; and contrary to the dignity of the body, who died that it may be raised again in glory.

(2.) Another argument is from our union with Christ. The bodies of the faithful are a part of his mystical body, and therefore must be used with reverence, and possessed in sanctification and honour; not given to an harlot, but reserved for Christ. He proveth the argument on both parts: he that is joined to an harlot maketh himself one with an harlot; and he that is joined with Christ becometh one with Christ: 'He that is joined to an harlot is one flesh;' namely, that conjunction is carnal and bodily. But by way of direct antithesis or opposition he telleth us, that 'he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' namely, this conjunction is holy and spiritual. This argument is urged ver. 15-17. Now this consideration should have great force upon christians, because unclean commixtures and embraces do not become them that profess to have union with Christ; for no two things can be more contrary and unsuitable than to make ourselves one with an harlot



and one with Christ ; one with an harlot, which God hath so severely prohibited, and one with Christ, which God hath so solemnly instituted ; yea, the things themselves are unsociable, carnal base pleasures and spiritual delights.

(3.) His third argument is taken from the dignity of the body, the dignity to which God hath advanced it, or the honour he hath put upon the bodies of christians, which is to be the temples of the Holy Ghost : ver. 19, 'What ! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God ?' You are set apart for this holy use, that the Spirit may govern and employ your bodies for the glory of God. So fornication is a polluting of the temple of God. Shall the temple of the Holy Ghost be turned into a swine's-sty ? It is dangerous to pollute holy things, to defile God's dwelling-place, or to bring base lusts into the special palace of God's residence ; therefore you are not to use your bodies as you please, not for an unclean, but holy use.

(4.) His last argument is from Christ's right : ver. 19, 20, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' Christ hath a right to both, and therefore both must be used for him, and according to his direction. Neither are our souls nor our bodies at liberty that we may use them as we please. Therefore to use the body for fornication is sacrilege, and a robbing Christ of his right ; he is Lord of both.

Let me now add some natural arguments against fornication, that those who will not be drawn from this carnality by scripture may yet be moved by nature. Our submission to God's authority, as having forbidden it in his law, and christian or gospel arguments, make the restraint less difficult or rigorous ; but if that will not do, nature itself will teach us that, if promiscuous lusts should be allowed, man would in nothing differ from the beasts, and such disorders would grow in the world as would make our abode unsafe therein. For what with rapes and violence, and frequent forsakings on man's part, and feminine revenge and impatiences on the woman's part, there would be no quiet and safe living one with another ; and all interests and possessions would be disturbed, for none could know in such a profane mixture what children were their own ; all love to posterity would be diminished, and consequently due education hindered, that there could not be a greater plague to mankind than this brutish and promiscuous liberty.

2. The next word is, 'All uncleanness ;' which is a more general word than fornication, for it implieth also adultery and filthiness between married persons, as well as simple fornication ; yea, incest and all brutish pleasures, which the lawless minds of men affect. There is uncleanness by inordinate desires : Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' In the eyes, by lascivious looks : 2 Peter ii. 14, 'Having eyes full of adultery.' In the tongue, by filthy and rotten speech : Eph. v. 4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' In the life and conversation, by all manner of noisome and foul practices which lust puts us upon ; of whatsoever kind they be, or by whatsoever name they be called. In

such sins, modesty forbiddeth us to be too curious, or to make a particular dissection, or cutting up the branches and parts of them; therefore all is wrapt up in this general expression, 'And all uncleanness.'

3. The next word is 'Covetousness.' But how cometh this to be put among the *nefanda*, the things not to be named? I answer—

[1.] The word is *πλεονεξία*, or immoderate desire; take it in the obvious sense for love to riches, or inordinate desire of wealth; it is a base sin, and will make us act basely. We stroke it with a gentle censure, but the scripture maketh other constructions of it, and always useth to represent it as an odious and detestable thing: 'Filthy lucre,' 1 Tim. iii. 3; Titus i. 7; 1 Peter v. 2. *Omnis impuritas est ex mixtura vilioris*—All impurity arises from the mixture of something that is more base. To be addicted to it argueth a sordid or filthy frame of spirit. It is abominable to God, and should be detestable to us.

[2.] I think it beareth here a more particular sense, and may be rendered, 'inordinate lust or luxury;' for the word signifieth not only a desire of money, but excessive and unnatural lusts; and that notion it clearly hath, Eph. iv. 19, 'They gave up themselves to work all uncleanness *ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ*, with greediness.' Certainly it is something that has affinity with uncleanness, and that is, acting it with greediness.

Secondly, The manner and degree of forbidding, 'Let it not be once named among you.' You will think this over-strict; and how can it be reprov'd if it be not named? But let us consider the sense.

1. The apostle speaketh thus to express the height of detestation; for things that we utterly detest we will not name them; as David would not take the names of their idols into his lips, Ps. xvi. 4, to express the great detestation he had of them. So the apostle here; let never these foul practices get the least admission among you; or that they should be so far from committing these things, that they should not name them, or think of them, without detestation and utter abhorrence.

2. That which is villanous to be done is also vile to be spoken of: ver. 12, 'It is a shame to speak of the things which are done of them in secret;' and 1 Cor. v. 1, 'Such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife;' that is, it was not a thing commonly practised among them, nor spoken of without great abhorrence. We should abstain from the needless mention of things detestable, lest we should reconcile them, and familiarise them to our thoughts; for vile things that are often spoken of seem less odious, and affect the sense (being common) with less horror than when strange. So that they are not to be named, that is, not without need, nor without detestation. It were well if there were no occasion to speak of them at all.

3. Some sins are more catching than others; the very mention of them may revive and stir the motions of them in an unmortified heart. And uncleanness and fornication are of this nature, because they tend immediately to please the flesh; other sins more remotely. Now where the fleshly mind and appetite are not subdued, what doth immediately please the flesh doth more presently stir the motions of it at the very mention, than what doth more remotely conduce to its satisfaction.



As the prophet taketh his similitude of condemning the idolatry of Israel from adulterers, and expresseth it thus : Ezek. xxiii. 19, ' Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth ; ' as if the remembrance of former adulteries were a new snare to her. And divines say, in the case of considering temptations, that we may be fore-armed against them, that it is not so safe to a man to consider the temptation of Joseph as the temptation of Peter, because the consideration of the first may rather ensnare than fortify the mind. All this sheweth that some sins, especially with some kind of tempers, are more catching and apt to induce men to sin ; therefore the apostle saith, ' Let it not be once named.'

4. There is a naming of these things which is very sinful, and that two ways—

[1.] When it is done in such a broad and coarse way, or nasty language, as doth rather invite sin than rebuke it. Immodest speech cometh certainly from a vain and filthy heart, and sheweth the absence of the fear of God : Mat. xii. 34, ' Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Men have a beastly savour with them, and vent it in their speech. As crows that are driven away from the carrion love to remain within the scent, so many whom shame restraineth, or whom age hath disabled to commit, do not act these sins, yet love to talk and discourse of them, and that with a gust and relish ; and by their way of naming these things discover their temper. This is that *σάπρος λόγος*, that ' rotten communication,' which the apostle reproveth : Eph. iv. 29, ' Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.' Obscene and corrupt discourse cometh from a rotten heart, as unsavoury breath doth from putrid lungs. This fire is kindled in their hearts, and the sparks fly abroad in their language and discourse to set others on burning. Therefore well might the apostle say, ' Let not these things be once named,' for we propagate our taint by our speech, and seek to make the hearers like ourselves : 1 Cor. xv. 33, ' Be not deceived ; evil communication corrupts good manners.' The talking of these things doth almost debauch the manners of the world, as well as the acting of them.

[2.] When we seek to palliate foul deeds with handsome and plausible names, and so speak of these things with allowance and extenuation, and not with extreme detestation. Christians must abhor the mentioning of such filthy sins in other manner than will induce the hearers to abhor them. Look, as calling drunken meetings good fellowship corrupts and taints the manners of the world, and doth induce men to a better opinion of the communion of sinners in this brutish way than it deserves, as if it maintained amity and love, so the dressing up of ugly sins in handsome and plausible names doth not beget such an abhorrence of them as christianity would enforce. As where we call lawless liberty platonic love ; or fornication, marriage in conscience ; or the adopting or taking in of a strumpet into the rights of the lawful wife, courtship, or having a mistress ; this is but the invention of poor deluded sinners to cheat themselves and the world, and to varnish a filthy thing with a cleanly notion, that it may go down the more glib with ourselves and others. How much better is it to speak as the word of God speaketh ? ' An whore is a deep ditch ; and he that is abhorred

of the Lord falleth therein,' Prov. xxii. 14; 'For an whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman a narrow pit,' Prov. xxiii. 27. This is plain and open, and cautions men how they slip into such a foul ditch. But sinners have a double deceit, they represent goodness and virtue under horrid names, as astronomers call glorious stars by the names of the bear, and the dragon's head, and the dragon's tail; but they insinuate vice with plausible names, that they may not consider how hateful to God both their persons and their practices are; and so keep the greater guard upon themselves lest they incur his sore displeasure. But let us take heed of adorning foul sins. The apostle saith, 'Let them not be once named without detestation.'

Thirdly, The reason, 'As it becometh saints;' that is, christians or believers; all of them are saints, or should be saints.

1. Some are so only by external dedication and profession; as by baptism they are set apart for God as a clean and holy people. None enter into Christ's kingdom but those that are washed and cleansed from sin: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' And their baptismal vow bindeth them to die unto sin, especially to the lust of uncleanness. But all that have given up their names to Christ have not given up themselves to Christ; and those that do not renounce their baptism, yet forget their baptism and the bond and obligation of it, 2 Peter i. 9. They forget or do not mind that once they were washed in God's laver. Surely there is an obligation upon them still to keep them from fornication, adultery, and all manner of uncleanness, lest they forfeit the name of saints: 1 Thes. iv. 7, 'For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.' If they renounced the flesh, they must subdue and crucify the flesh chiefly in the grosser lusts, otherwise their baptism will be a nullity as to their comfort and benefit by it, yet not as to their judgment and punishment. Better never have been baptized in that sense: 2 Peter ii. 20, 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' In those early times grown persons were baptized, and none were admitted to it but upon some knowledge of Christ, and professed resolutions to forsake the *μιάσματα*, the pollutions of the world; but if they relapse again into them, the league and confederacy between Satan and their flesh being never thoroughly dissolved, and wallow in the filthiness they had renounced, better they had never meddled with religion. By quitting holiness they forsake blessedness, and involve themselves in the greater punishment. As they turn from the holy commandment, they turn from the gracious promises. They do not dislike the happiness offered by Christ, but the seriousness of his religion; so that the privilege of betaking themselves to the way of Christ maketh their guilt become the greater and more dangerous. Christian heathenism is worse than bare heathenism at first. Now though we are born christians, yet the case is almost the same; we do not renounce our parents' act when we come to years of discretion, rather pretend to stand to our baptismal vow and covenant, submit to the instructions of the church, would take it ill not to be accounted christians, own the same creed and Bible that others do. But alas! what will your



christianity profit you if you live in all uncleanness, fornication, and filthiness? There are certain frailties incident to the best, but the *μιάσματα κόσμου*, the pollutions of the world, these are spots that are not as the spots of God's children.

2. Others are saints by internal regeneration, as sanctified and renewed by the Holy Ghost: Titus iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' These have the effect of their baptism wrought in them. Now these things are contrary to the disposition and spirit of saints, or to the holy, new, and divine nature which is put into them. Nothing so opposite to the spirit as the flesh; and among all the lusts of the flesh, those which have most turpitude in them, as the lusts of uncleanness. Hence nature hath imprinted a shame upon them; and conscience, till it be debauched and seared, will never suffer men to live quietly and securely in them. Now if bare nature thinketh it a stain and blemish to us, much more the new nature, which checks those lusts, and bears back as from something abhorrent and contrary to itself. If nature blush at the sin, surely grace or the new nature should restrain it.

II. What purity and cleanness of heart belongeth to christians? In the scripture they are everywhere described by it: Ps. xviii. 18, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,' John xv. 3, 'Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you;' Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'Surely God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;' 2 Cor. vi. 17, 'Separate yourselves from the unclean thing, and I will receive you;' and in other places. God being purity, light, and perfection itself, cannot delight in an unclean person: Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' It were endless to instance in all places. Let us see what obligations lie upon us to be clean and pure.

1. We are consecrated to the service of a holy God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Our God is pure: Hab. i. 13, 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' that is, so as to let it go unpunished. We should never think of this, but we should abhor ourselves, and be ashamed of the remainders of corruption in us. Much dregs and dross of sin yet remain in the best. Christ is pure, undefiled, separate from sinners; so should we be who are separated from the world and dedicated unto God. And he came to wash us in his blood, and cleanse us by his Spirit, and followeth the work he hath begun, till we be without spot and blemish: Eph. v. 25-27, 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.' The Holy Spirit, if we belong to God, hath already begun to purify and sanctify us: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' And the great part of our duty lieth in obeying his sanctifying motions: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' Now all this obligeth us to great purity of heart and life.

2. We profess the most holy faith ; this obligeth us also, whether we look to the laws of God, which are the rule of our duty, or the promises of God, which are the charter of our hopes.

[1.] The laws of God, which measure out our duty to us : Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' It is pure in itself, as being the copy of God's holiness. There is no dead fly in this box of pure ointment, nothing but what tendeth to cleanse the heart of man from all that is base and filthy ; and it maketh us pure : Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way ? By taking heed thereunto according to thy word.' It is not direct, or order, but cleanse. The youngest are defiled already, and if they will believe and obey the word, there is hope of their cure.

[2.] The promises, which are the charter of our hopes.

(1.) The thing itself, which is promised as our great happiness, enforceth it ; and what is that but to see God as he is, and be like him ? And 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure,' 1 John iii. 3. The reason is, because if we count it as a happiness to see God, and be like him, we will desire it and endeavour it. Now nothing can be propounded to us as the object of our eternal delight and satisfaction but what is the object of our present desires and endeavours. If we do not desire it now, and endeavour it now, how can we look upon it as our blessedness hereafter ? For satisfaction is the fulfilling of our desires, the rest of our motion. The offer of a Turkish paradise may breed a brutish spirit in us, but to look for a pure estate should make us pure and clean.

(2.) Purity of heart and life is necessary to the obtaining of it. Our interest is suspended upon the performance of this condition. The comfortable vision of God in the life to come doth only belong to the clean and pure : Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' No unclean thing can enter into the new Jerusalem ; that is no place for goats or swine. Therefore, unless we get this cleanness of heart, we shall not be admitted into God's blessed presence.

(3.) This fitteth us for it. There is an aptitudinal as well as a conditional right. As it is a condition indispensably required, so also the preparation dispositively fitting us for this state : Col. i. 12, 'Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' The riper we grow for heaven, the more pure and holy we are, and the more without sin.

[3.] Because of our present communion with God and service of God.

(1.) Our present communion with God in prayer or other duties requires it. Surely they that are so frequent and familiar with a holy God should be a clean and holy people : 1 Tim. ii. 8, 'I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands ;' James iv. 8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you ; cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' In the Lord's supper : John xiii. 8, 'Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' So in general, in our whole commerce with God : 1 John i. 7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'



(2.) So our present service of God requires it. None but the pure and clean are fitted to do God service in the world : 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.' 'From these,' that is, from youthful lusts ; he is more useful for Christ, and an instrument better fitted for his glory.

III. The special impurity that is in such sins, so that holiness must be forsaken, or else these vices so opposite to holiness. What special impurity is there in those sins ?

1. They defile the body, and are contrary to the dignity of the body, as it is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, or an instrument to be used for the glory of God : 1 Cor. vi. 18, 'Flee fornication : every sin that a man doeth is without the body ; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' Most other sins are against God or our neighbour, but sins of uncleanness are in a special manner against one's self, a debasing or defiling the body, a polluting of that which is consecrated to God to serve him : 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication ; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.' Sanctification is there taken for chastity. A man's vessel is his body ; for the Hebrews call any instrument of use a vessel. Now the keeping it in honour is to preserve it for God's use, and not to prostitute it to our base lusts. Well, then, if cleanness and purity be so necessary to christians, a sin of so foul a nature must not be slighted, it dishonoureth and polluteth the body.

2. Uncleanness corrupts and defileth the mind ; for it turneth it from the true pleasure to the false, and that procured on the basest terms of downright sin against God. It is ill to be corrupted by any degree of temporal delight, though the thing in itself be lawful ; as his excuse was faulty who said, Luke xiv. 20, 'I have married a wife and cannot come.' The entanglements of marriage should not keep thee from Christ, but the unlawful pleasures of whoredom make the case much more unquestionable. This carrieth away the thoughts and corrupteth the heart, that they do not only forget God, but deny God, and do bring in a brutishness upon the heart of man ; and therefore men are easily taken in this snare, and hardly rescued, being bewitched by their sensuality : Prov. ii. 19, 'None that go in unto her return again, nor take they hold of the path of life.' And the preacher saith, Eccles. vii. 28, 'One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all these have I not found ;' Prov. xxii. 14, 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit ; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' Now all these places show, not the utter impossibility, but the difficulty of repentance, and how hardly this sin is shaken off when once we are inveigled by it ; for this sin is a strange enchantment on men.

*Use 1.* Is information, to inform us what need we have to work in christians a greater abhorrence of fornication and uncleanness, because it is a common sin and a grievous sin.

1. It is a common sin ; and then it is time to cry aloud and spare not, when persons, both single and married, make so little conscience of this duty. Must we then come and honey them and oil them with

grace, or feed men's curiosity with tame and smooth strains of contemplative divinity? No; this were to rock them asleep in their sins. No; let us rather convince them of their gross immoralities, unfaithfulness in the marriage covenant. Possibly many of them had never gone so far if these things had been oftener revived on their consciences. Usually men are tender at first, till they be steeped in sin and bestiality; but as their minds are further enchanted, all means are too weak, and God's remedy insufficient. Lust cherished groweth arrogant, and knoweth no shame; for then they go on in sin the rather because God forbiddeth it: Isa. iii. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not;' Jer. v. 8, 'They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.' Their consciences are debauched and judicially hardened, and so have lost all remorse of conscience and fear of God's judgment.

2. It is a grievous sin. We will endeavour to touch them in the tenderest part that is left, viz., fear: Heb. xiii. 4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Men think it a small matter to satisfy nature, but God will find them out both here and hereafter. There fell in one day twenty-three thousand for this sin: 1 Cor. x. 8, 'Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.' The inconvenience of it is sensible. It consumeth the strength of the body: Prov. v. 11, 'And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and body are consumed.' It wasteth the estate: Job xxxi. 12, 'For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and will root out all mine increase.' And bringeth a blemish upon the name: Prov. vi. 33, 'A wound and a dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' It withdraweth the heart from God: Hosea iv. 11, 12, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart; for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err; they have gone a-whoring from under their God.' It unfitteth for every holy duty. Holy and sacred things never can be seriously received by sensual minds and hearts. Nay, it tempteth you to forget God, or question his being, and become, if not a downright atheist, a sceptic in religion. And, lastly, it casteth men into hell: Rev. xxi. 8, 'Whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

*Use 2.* Is caution to young men that are not yet taken in the snare. Keep yourselves at a great distance from and great abhorrence of this sin. Therefore, first, avoid occasions: Prov. v. 8, 'Remove thy way far from her; come not nigh the door of her house.' So avoid Satan's assemblies for the communion of sinners, to stir up lusts and filthiness in them. Avoid the haunts of evil company, where they meet to inflame their lusts: Prov. iv. 15, 'Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.' Avoid idleness: 2 Sam. xi. 2, 'And David arose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house, and from the top he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.' David's heart was fixed. Avoid fulness of bread, excess in eating and drinking, Ezek. xvi. 49. Avoid obscene discourse. They are foolish and vain who think they have a chaste mind when they indulge themselves in all liberty of speech. The speech bewrayeth the temper of the heart. Season your hearts with



God's word: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereunto according to thy word;' 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' But especially get a sound fear and reverence of God rooted in your hearts: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Live always as in the sight of God, who is thy maker, preserver, and judge.

*Use 3.* Is advice to all christians. Upon all occasions, think what will become saints. Let the conscience of your dedication to God be ever upon your hearts. We that are adopted into God's family, to be children of God, and heirs of eternal life, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, cleansed and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, what a clean heart should we have within ourselves! what an holy life should we carry in the view of others! Our words should be grave and serious, our conversations such as will become the gospel; that no filthiness may be allowed in us, or drop from us in word or deed: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.' We are servants of an holy God; we have holy work to do, and an holy estate to expect.

#### SERMON IV.

*Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.—Eph. v. 4.*

THE apostle having condemned three gross sins in life and practice, he cometh now to speak of three other sins in speech; for all impurity, both in word and deed, is forbidden to christians. In the words note—  
 (1.) The sins enumerated, 'Filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting';  
 (2.) The reason of the prohibition, those things 'are not convenient';  
 (3.) The special duty substituted into their room and place, 'But rather giving thanks.'

First, the sins enumerated are—(1.) *Ἀισχροτής*, 'filthiness,' called elsewhere *ἁισχρολογία*, filthy communication, 1 Cor. iii. 8, which is a broad speaking of those things that belong to uncleanness. (2.) There is *μαρολογία*, 'foolish talking,' which is meant either of all impertinent, rash, and roving discourse, which doth rather bewray the speaker's folly and indiscretion than any way edify the hearers: Prov. xv. 2, 'The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.' When men use a multitude of useless words to no purpose, or have a torrent of words for a drop of sense; or of those that make themselves fools, or act the part of a fool to please others, as David counterfeited madness before Achish; as if it were the praise of a man to make himself an artificial fool or jester to humour others. (3.) The third word is *ἐντραπελία*, which we translate 'jesting.' The philosopher understands by it that virtue which is

called urbanity, which is the middle between scurrility and rusticity. But as things easily degenerate, so do names; therefore the apostle useth it for that exercise of wit that may be called foolery or mockery, such as idle and scoffing companions use to make themselves merry with, or to please some with the hurt and offence of others, and suiteth not with christian piety, gravity, charity.

Secondly, The argument or reason used against them: τὰ οὐκ ἀνήκοντα, 'These things are not convenient;' that is, these things are unseemly, or unbefitting the seriousness and holiness of a christian; and so it is the same argument with the former, 'as it becometh saints,' only delivered with some difference of expression. We are apt to extenuate these sins, therefore consider what will become saints. Christianity is a grave thing; it consists chiefly of two parts—dying to sin and living to God; and those that come under the power as well as the profession of it are to behave themselves partly as men in conflict with sin, and partly as those that study to honour and glorify God. With respect to the first part, our life should be a perpetual repentance, always getting farther from sin; therefore the present season is not a time of laughter and vain mirth, but of agony and strife against the devil, the world, and the flesh. To live in pleasure upon earth is to gratify our spiritual enemies, to be laughing when we should be mourning and weeping, or sowing in tears that we may reap in joy. Therefore obscene talk or vain babbling, that serveth for no grave use, ridiculous mirth that only tendeth to vain pleasure, layeth us open to our enemies, with whom we are in constant warfare; and so it is unbecoming christians, as evidencing a naughty spirit in ourselves, and as tending to infect others. With respect to the second, the honouring and pleasing God, our whole life should be a constant hymn to God, or a perpetual act of praise and thanksgiving: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' Therein we have a fitter subject for our rejoicing than obscene and scurrilous discourse, wherein profane persons most show their wit.

Thirdly, The duty substituted into the room and place of these: 'But rather *εὐχαριστία*, giving of thanks;' meaning to God (though he be not mentioned), from whom all mercies are received, and to whom all praises are due. This is added—(1.) To show that delight is not abrogated, but preferred or transferred to a better object; and so answers the objection, Must a christian be always sad? No; let your mirth run in a spiritual channel, and then you will have cheerfulness enough, matter of rejoicing enough, upon better terms, and at a more sincere rate. (2.) It specifieth what should be the christian's mirth, the commemoration of the mercy of God, especially the great benefits we have by Christ. We need not be beholden to sin for our joy; we have the innumerable benefits of God to rejoice in: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who loadeth us daily with his benefits, even the God of our salvation;' and Eph. v. 20, 'Giving thanks always unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' There is the christian's way of mirth, and that which should revive and cheer his soul; there he may rejoice always, and rejoice without offence, and



needeth not run to obscene talking or unsavoury jests to cause laughter. If we be christians indeed, and esteem what we profess to believe, can anything be more contentful to us? (3.) It intimateth what we should do when our hearts are most disposed to mirth, and we are apt to let loose ourselves to joy and gladness; as, namely, when we are cheered with the liberal use of the creature at feasts and banquets, we should not wholly compose ourselves to ridiculous mirth, but rather give thanks: James v. 13, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' When we have our souls at this advantage, we should turn our rejoicing into a spiritual channel.

From this view you see the drift of the text. I shall handle it more diffusively in these observations—

I. That christians should make great conscience, not only of their actions, but their words also; for after the apostle had dissuaded them from all uncleanness and filthiness in practice, he addeth, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' We must make conscience of our words for these reasons—

1. We are not absolute proprietors and possessors of our own selves; our tongues are not our own to speak what we please. Exempt any one faculty or member from the jurisdiction of God, and you disown his authority and interest in you, and open a floodgate to let in sin and wickedness into the world. They were rebels against God's government that said, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' We had them from God, and they must be used for him, not against him; therefore we are not left to run at random in our ordinary discourse, to say and utter what we think good.

2. As we had our tongues from God, so we are accountable to him for the use of them; and therefore will our actions not only be brought into the judgment, but our words and speeches also: Mat. xii. 36, 37, 'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' As if our Lord had said, Deceive not yourselves, as if words were too light to be accounted for. Words, such as they may be, may occasion a sad reckoning between Christ and you; for in distributing rewards and punishments, he considereth words as well as actions. All the business is what is that *ῥῆμα ἄργον*, that idle word which our Lord there speaketh of, and how far it reacheth. The word may signify either vain or false: those false and blasphemous words which, out of the malignity of their hearts, they had uttered against him, are certainly comprised; namely, that he did cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. But are not other words of lesser malignity included also? Yes; all that bewray the evil treasure of the heart, an ill talent in men, as contumelies and reproaches against godliness; yea, rotten speech, that sheweth the prevalency of uncleanness in the heart, for they are such words as discover a man's state and temper; for the judgment of absolution and condemnation is to be passed according to these words. And though we cannot extend the rigour of it so far as to say that every word which conduceth not to some end of christian edification shall make men miscarry in the judgment—(alas! who then could be saved?)—yet surely we ought to make conscience of all our words.

As we must take care that we prejudice not christian hope, so we must not open a gap to looseness; therefore do not say, It is but a matter of words; for how little soever men may esteem words, they may weigh heavy in God's balance, and idle words must be avoided as well as gross sins.

3. Words do much discover the temper of a man's heart. There are three operations of man by which he is discovered to be what he is—thoughts, words, and actions; and all these we should make conscience of. Certainly in all these things there should be a difference between the people of God and others. To instance in what we are upon, the people of God should be observably different in their words and discourse from other men: Prov. x. 20, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth;' where the tongue of the righteous is opposed to the heart of the wicked, and compared to silver, and the heart of the wicked to dross. Because their heart is little worth, their discourse will be accordingly, for the tongue sheweth what is in the heart. So Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool doth not so.' Men usually discourse as their hearts are. A man of a frothy spirit will bring forth nothing but vain and frothy discourse, but a gracious man will utter holy and gracious things, for the tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled. One place more: Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the law of God is in his heart.' All men's discourses are vented accordingly as their hearts are busied and affected. A man that hath the law of God in his heart, and maketh it his work to suit his actions thereunto, will also suit his words to it, and edify those with whom he speaketh. Thoughts, words, and actions are the genuine products and issues of the heart. Grace in the heart discovereth itself uniformly in holy thoughts, holy words, and holy actions; therefore if our conference be not different from ordinary men's, it sheweth the temper and constitution of our souls is the same.

4. Because our tongue is our glory: Ps. lvii. 8, 'Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp;' Ps. xvi. 9, 'My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.' Compare Acts ii. 26, 'My heart is glad, and my tongue rejoiceth.' So Ps. xxx. 12, 'That my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent;' that is, my tongue. But why is our tongue called our glory? For a double reason, both which are pertinent to the case in hand—

[1.] Because thereby we can express the conceptions of our minds for the good of mankind. It was not given to us for that use for which the tongues of the brute beasts serve them, to taste meats and drinks only, or to taste our food. No; but to converse with each other. Speech is the excellency of man above the beasts. Man is ζῶον πολιτικόν, a sociable creature, and therefore fitted by God that we may entertain one another with discourse. Now it is a manifest abuse of this excellent faculty when, instead of propagating wisdom and knowledge, we should only vent our corruption by it; and should make no other use of it but to vent our scum and froth to the poisoning and infecting of other souls. This is to propagate the general taint, and to make one another more corrupt than we are by nature. Well might



the prophet complain : Isa. vi. 5, 'I am a man of polluted lips, and dwell among a people of polluted lips.' By the lips the contagion of sin spreadeth from one to another, and so our glory is turned into shame. Therefore if men do not make conscience of their words, their tongues will run riot against all decency both of speaker and hearers.

[2.] The other reason why it is called our glory is because thereby we may express the conceptions of our minds, to the glory of God as well as the good of others : James iii. 9, 'Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' And this is proper to us, not only beyond the beasts, but even the angels. The beasts have tongues, but no reason ; the angels have reason, but no tongues ; but man hath reason, and a tongue wherewith to utter it, and so man is the mouth of the creation, who can not only think of God, but speak of God, his word and works. Therefore the chief use of the tongue is to glorify and praise God, to magnify his name, and delight our souls in the sweet commemoration of his excellencies and benefits : Ps. xxxv. 28, 'My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.' This is the great and noble use of the tongue, to give the Lord thanks for mercies received, or what he has done for the world, for the church, for our bodies and our souls. Now shall the mouth that is consecrated to God be filled with dung, and the tongue which was designed for so excellent and noble a use as to be God's harp be debased to so vile an office as to become Satan's trumpet, to stir up filthiness and uncleanness in ourselves and others, pollute that tongue with lust and filthiness which should speak of the holy God ?

5. Because our speeches are regarded by God ; and therefore you must consider not only what is fit for you to utter and others to hear, but what is fit for God to hear. You are indeed to consider all three. What is fit for you to utter : Will this become saints ? What is fit for man to hear as tending to his profit, at least not to his hurt. But this is not all ; in the close of the day, when you are making your *examen*, have you spoken such words as are fit for God to hear ? Ps. cxxxix. 4, 'There is not a word in my tongue but thou knowest it altogether.' There is not a word we speak, vain or serious, idle or to purpose, but the Lord considereth it perfectly : Mal. iii. 16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written.' He taketh notice of every word that is spoken for or against him. Reason will tell us that this certainly belongeth to the infinite perfection of God's nature ; but if it were soundly believed, it would make men more cautious. If you have spoken wantonly, filthily, foolishly, the Lord heareth, and you must give an account of it to him. Now tell me, should we not make conscience of our words ?

6. Because the well ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace : James iii. 2, 'He that offendeth not with his tongue is a perfect man ;' that is, hath made a good progress in religion ; for so many ways do we offend with our tongues, that to restrain the irregularities of them sheweth that we have a good sense of our duty, or a great awe of God upon our hearts, and are able to resist other temptations, and guide our actions according to the

christian rule. Now, that you may not think it an arbitrary thing, let me tell you there is an absolute complete perfection, and there is a perfection of sincerity. He doth not mean it in the first sense, for he saith there, 'In many things we offend all.' The best have much to blame and accuse themselves of. But in the latter sense, he is a true and sincere christian, one that hath profited in the doctrine of Christ, and desireth to do all the will of God. But what doth the apostle say of other manner of christians, that have gotten no manner of government of their tongues, but let them loose to all kind of vanity and folly, censuring, detraction, and evil speaking, &c. ? James i. 26, 'If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain ;' that is, though he maketh show of living religiously, or serving and worshipping of God, he doth but deceive himself if he thinketh his religion shall stand him in any stead. Well, then, life and death are in the power of the tongue ; upon the good or ill use of it dependeth not only our temporal but eternal safety.

II. In making conscience of our words, we should specially take heed of filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting.

There are many evils of the tongue, but these are those which we have now under consideration. For the first, 'filthiness,' men will easily grant that this is an evil, but think not so of the second and third. Natural conscience and reason may cause us to blush at filthiness, but is apt to patronise and plead for fooling and jesting, as strains of wit and pleasantness, and not matters of sin and crime ; therefore we must go over them particularly, and show that they are sins which become not sincere christians.

1. Filthiness is when we speak of obscene things in an obscene manner, without any respect to modesty and christian gravity or sobriety. Now this is a great evil, for filthy speakers bring the spiritual *miserere* upon themselves, or that disease whereby men vomit their excrements by their mouth ; nothing is more beastly than their speeches. But they that can speak filthy words without blushing will commit filthy deeds without shame or restraint ; for by their filthy talk they have polluted their own minds, and prepared themselves for the sin.

[1.] It is a sin most inconsistent with any reverence and fear of God : Ps. xix. 9, 'The fear of the Lord is clean.' Because there is shamelessness and boldness in it : Isa. iii. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom ; they hide it not.' Now it is a grievous temper and state of heart to know no shame, for this is to contemn and despise God. Others disobey him ; but such despise him, and seem to have cast off all honesty, and glory in their shame, as if it were a credit to them to defy the holy God and the restraint of his laws.

[2.] It is a grief to the Holy Spirit, as it obstructs that purity and cleanness of heart which he would work in us : Eph. iv. 29, 30, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The Spirit is represented both as the Holy Spirit, and as the Spirit of peace, and so opposite both to filthiness and clamour. His habitation must be clean and quiet ; therefore clamour, wrath, and bitterness must be put away.



[3.] You infect others, and corrupt them by filthy discourse. Many an hopeful gentleman hath been debauched this way, by unclean representations both from the stage and the talk of their company. The filthy speakers are factors for hell to proselyte men to the devil, and draw unwary souls into his snare : 2 Peter ii. 18, 'They allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error ;' they entice and cast them back again into all carnality and filthiness

2. The next word is *μαρολογία*, 'foolish speaking.' This hath so many branches, that it is hard to reckon them up ; as—

[1.] When they speak of foolish things. As some can spend hours in telling vain tales, that serve for no other use but to possess the minds of the hearers with levity and folly. Now if the 'thought of foolishness be sin,' Prov. xxiv. 9, words of foolishness are much more sin, as they are more public, and abuse the time and ears of others : Prov. xv. 14, 'The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness ;' it is as diet to them.

[2.] When men speak of serious things in a ludicrous and vain manner, and design it for jest. This is playing with sacred things, like the Philistines calling for Samson to make them sport, Judges xvi. 25, or the Babylonians asking for one of the songs of Sion, Ps. cxxxvii. 3, or the sensualists inventing themselves instruments of music like David, Amos vi. 5, as if their carnal mirth never relished better than when it is seasoned with something that is sacred, and religion is forced to serve their profane mirth.

[3.] Lavish, superfluous speech to no end : Prov. xxix. 11, 'A fool uttereth all his mind.' They can hold nothing, but, whether it tend to hurt or profit, out it cometh. Many have gotten a custom of vain babbling, and full of endless talk to no purpose. Now 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,' Prov. x. 13 ; and all this prattle cometh out of a vain and foolish heart, that never had any serious sense of holy things ; and therefore are indifferent what they speak, for God or error ; things that belong to them, or belong to them not, their own or other men's matters.

[4.] Rash speech, to speak of things they understand not. As the apostle speaketh of some that, desiring to be teachers of the law, understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, 1 Tim. i. 7. As many, like little infants, will attempt to run before they can go, so some are full of talk, and all about matters of controversy in religion, which they understand little of. But empty vessels and shallow brooks make the loudest noise.

[5.] Another kind of it is personal boasting, to set off themselves and their own excellencies. All their discourse is of themselves : Prov. xxv. 27, 'For men to search their own glory is not glory.' This *περιαιτιολογία* is foolish speaking, when all their discourse tendeth to set off themselves, and usher in something of themselves, and *I* cometh in at the end of every sentence. The rule is, another man's mouth should commend us, not our own : Prov. xxvii. 2, 'Let another man praise thee, not thine own mouth ; a stranger, not thine own lips.' But I will not undertake to reckon up all the kinds of it.

Now I shall prove that it is a sin that should be made conscience of.

(1.) Because it suiteth not with the seriousness of religion, which is

the wisdom of God. As he hath manifested the riches of his grace and goodness in the gospel, so he hath 'abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence,' Eph. i. 8. There should not be a wiser man than a christian, who is guided by the direction and counsel of a wise God, and therefore all his discourse should be grave and wise and serious. Solomon telleth us, Prov. x. 31, that 'The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom. His heart is stocked with such truths as contain the highest wisdom in the world, and therefore his mouth should overflow with it; as he that hath in his pocket more store of gold than of brass farthings will at every draught bring out more gold than farthings.

(2.) It suiteth not with the mortified estate of sincere christians. All foolish talking cometh from some unmortified lusts in our hearts, such as pride, vainglory, worldliness, uncleanness; therefore are they talking of vain things, and boasting of themselves with the contempt of others; and till these lusts be mortified, in vain do we expect a cure. Now when the heart is purified and purged from vanity, worldliness, and pride, men's discourse is presently altered. If the heart be set on the world, their discourse is commonly of the world: 1 John v. 5, 'They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' If the heart be unclean, and swarm with noisome lusts, the speech will be rotten. If the heart be proud, men love to hear themselves talk. Vainglory will betray itself in our discourses. Every carnal affection leaveth a tincture on our speech.

(3.) Because it shutteth out better discourse, and so converse with others is rendered unprofitable. Omission of good is caused by it. A christian should come into no company but he should bethink himself what he is to do or say for God there. Now when men abandon themselves to foolish speaking, they little mind the use of edifying, or speaking of the great and most necessary things. Better things would come into other men's minds and mouths if they were not entertained with such vain discourse; and so the lean kine eat up the fat, and the better part doth not only give way to necessary business, but even impertinent vanities. Martha is rebuked for losing the season, when Mary heard Christ's gracious words, Luke x. 39-41, and she was employed about the necessary ministry of the family. How much then are they to be rebuked that jostle out all good discourse by their vain and unprofitable talk!

(4.) Because it argueth great emptiness, that we have not a good treasure within us, Mat. xii. 35, or have not hid the word in our hearts, Ps. cxix. 11, or not taken care that it might dwell in us richly, Col. iii. 16. The full vessel will plash over, but vain empty spirits have nothing good to serve and supply the necessities of others.

3. We come now to the third sin enumerated, 'and jesting,' *ἐντραπέλια*.

Here we must state this matter.

Is all jesting unlawful and misbecoming christians?

[1.] My answer must be negative; for honest recreation and moderate laughter, to fit the mind for serious things, is certainly lawful: Eccles. iii. 4, 'There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh;' and honest and pleasant discourses are, at fit times and opportunities, lawful and edifying, as they tend to maintain cheerfulness of mind, and alacrity of spirit, which is profitable both to our health and duty: Prov.



xvii. 22, 'A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.' Why then should we not exercise our tongues facetiously, as well as any other member? But then—

[2.] I must tell you that, in recreating our spirits with pleasant and delightful discourse, it is an hard matter to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth. There is an easy passage from what is allowed to what is forbidden: 'The fool's heart is in the house of mirth,' Eccles. vii. 4, 5; whereas the house of mourning is more profitable for us in this mixed estate.

[3.] In the use of it, all due circumstances must be observed; as—

(1.) In the matter. On the one side, filthiness and sin must not be matter of jesting; for that always is matter of grief and shame to us, whether we reflect upon it as committed by ourselves or others. It is a dunghill mirth that must have somewhat unclean to feed it. On the other side, nothing sacred. It is profane and impious for men to abuse scripture, to vent the conceptions of their light and wanton wits. No; there must be still a care, as of christian sobriety, that nothing sinful, so of christian piety, that nothing sacred, may be the matter of our mirth.

(2.) For the manner. It must be harmless to others, not making sport with their sins or miseries; for that is against charity, which 'rejoiceth not in evil,' οὐκ ἐπιχαρακακεῖ, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Especially not to mock at parents, magistrates, and others whom for their age, gifts, or office we are bound to reverence. Yea, we must consider what others are able to bear, not making ourselves merry with their infirmities, nor using such offensive jests and tart reflections on their personal imperfections as may provoke them to wrath and anger.

(3.) For the measure. Not excessive wasting the time in vain, especially not habituating the mind to levity; that is scurrility when men accustom themselves so to vain jesting that they cannot possibly be serious; they can as well be immortal as serious. This hardeneth the heart in impenitency, and maketh some men look like professed jesters rather than christians. They have hardened themselves in the excess of a jocular way, that a man cannot tell whenever they are serious. And so, for the warning of the world, God hangeth up some in the chains of this sin, as well as others as instances for gluttony, whoredom, and drunkenness.

(4.) For the time. Not when God calleth us to mourning or more serious employments should it be taken in hand. To be jesting in public calamities is to affront God's providence. And business must not give way to sport. Our true mirth lieth in our duty, and that must have the chief place, especially in its season.

(5.) The end and use must not be forgotten. Our great end is to serve and glorify God, and everything that we do must have respect to it, and be proportioned by it. As the apostle speaketh of other passions of soul: 2 Cor. v. 13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God; if we be sober, it is for your sakes.' In all tempers he minded the glory of God and their good. So in other passions; sorrow is allowable, as it worketh repentance unto salvation; so mirth, as it doth exhilarate the spirits for the service of God, and as it may be useful to our great end; it is therefore to be allowed only so far as it is concomitant with and subservient unto better things.

III. One special means of checking such sins is to consider how much they misbecome christians; for the apostle saith no more but 'they are not convenient,' or do not agree with that state of grace into which we profess to be called.

For three reasons this will hold good—

1. Because there are four affections which serve to draw us from and guard us against sin—fear, shame, grief, and indignation. Our flight from sin is begun in fear, continued in shame, carried on by grief or sorrow, and endeth in indignation; and so sin is renounced, and the power of it broken. Now all these affections have a proper ground and consideration to set them a-work. Fear of wrath and damnation begins the work; for men have a quicker sense of danger than of other things. Shame looketh upon sin, not only as hurtful, but as filthy and brutish, and that which maketh us loathsome to God. It is φόβος δικαίου ψόγου, fear of just disgrace. The filthiness and folly of sin is the proper object of shame. Sorrow considereth God's goodness and sin's unkindness, causing us to mourn that we should break the laws of God, to whom we are so much obliged, for very trifles. Indignation worketh on the unseemliness and disconveniency of sin, either to the nature of man, or that grace to which we are called by Christ. In short, fear looketh on sin as damning: Acts ii. 37, 'When they heard this, they were pricked at their hearts, saying What shall we do to be saved?' Shame, as defiling: Ezek. vi. 9, 'They shall loathe themselves for the evils they have committed in all their abominations.' Sorrow, as offensive to so good a God: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him;' Luke vii. 47, 'She hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.' Indignation looketh upon sin as unbecoming our present resolutions and professions, our hopes and interest: Isa. xxx. 22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence;' Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' this is the soul's expulsive faculty. In short, the guilt of sin causeth fear; the stain, shame; the unkindness, sorrow; unsuitableness, indignation. Awaken this, and sin cannot have long entertainment in the heart. Therefore it is enough to a serious christian: It is not convenient.

2. The unsuitableness mindeth us of our dignity, as being admitted to communion with God. Therefore to talk of filthiness with that tongue which is to be employed in speaking of God, and to God, is a most indecorous thing; as it is to empty nature and put our food into the same vessel. Will you pollute those lips that should show forth God's praise? There is no agreement between these things; either we must lay aside the one or the other. Now which will you part with, filthiness and foolish speaking, or the blessing and praising of God? Both parts you cannot act well, for the one is destructive of the other.

3. This striketh at the root of the temptation. Many think filthiness, foolish speaking, and jesting to be a great grace to them, and affect the reputation of wit at such a rate that they forget honesty. No; these are not an honour and a grace, but a blemish and a blot. The apostle telleth you they are 'not convenient.' You thwart not only religion, but baffle conscience, that secretly telleth you this is not grave and



serious; it is not a glory, but a baseness; a thing you may rather be ashamed of, than affect the venting of wit in this manner, or pride yourselves in the deformed birth of your foolish minds.

IV. That a christian cannot want mirth as long as he hath such abundant cause to give thanks.

I will open this note in these considerations—

1. That it is an excellent exchange when we can change a sin for a duty; as in this case, by turning censure into admonition, and reproof or discontent into prayer, complaining of God into complaining to God, or carnal mirth into spiritual rejoicing, or jesting into giving thanks.

2. Evils are best cured by diversion. When our pleasantness is not abolished, but diverted, and directed to its proper object. It would be a shame for a man that calls himself a christian not to acknowledge that giving of thanks is a better subject of our mirth than filthiness and folly. The mind must have some oblectation, but let it run in its proper channel. Thankfulness is the sweetest employment in the world. To be always thinking or speaking of such sweet things as the mercies of God, surely if we esteem and value them, it will be more delightful to us than to be pleasing our fleshly lusts: Ps. lxxiii. 5, 'My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.'

3. None have such cause of delightful praise and thanksgiving as a christian. He hath greater matters to talk of than those things that are the subject of fools' boasting. Besides what is common to him with others, all the works of God to admire, and his excellencies shining forth in creation and providence, he hath the mystery of redemption, the grace of the new covenant, the glory of heaven, his own hopes. Our whole religion is an *εὐχαριστία*; for christianity is a partaking of the benefit, 1 Tim. vi. 2; besides many personal favours which should ever be before our eyes.

4. There is not any case incident to a christian but still there will be found ground of thanksgiving and rejoicing: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.' We have cause to be thankful for particular grace, for mercies in hand or hope. Well, then, carnal mirth may be cured by such a remedy at hand.

## SERMON V.

*For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—EPH. v. 5.*

THE apostle had argued *ab incongruo*, from what is indecent and misbecoming saints; now a *periculo*, from the danger of such practices: and fitly, because temptations do not usually enter by the fore-door of reason, but the back-door of sensual appetite and carnal desires; which therefore must be counterbalanced by dangers and fears, that, seeing the hook, we may be afraid to swallow the bait. The danger

of such practices is double—there is *pœna damni et sensus*. *Pœna damni*, exclusion from the kingdom of God, as in the text read to you. *Pœna sensus*, they run the hazard of his wrath and eternal displeasure; as ver. 6, ‘For these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.’

In the text there is—

1. A sentence passed on all unclean persons: they have no ‘inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.’

2. The certainty and evidence of it: ‘For this ye know.’

First, In the sentence we have—(1.) The subject, or persons spoken of; (2.) The predicate, what is said of them.

1. The subject: ‘No whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous, who is an idolater.’ Where mark, he mentioneth not the lesser sins, filthiness of talk, foolish speaking, jesting, but the more grievous transgressions spoken of ver. 3, *ὅτι πᾶς πόρνος, ἢ ἀκαθαρτος, ἢ πλεονέκτης*; not but that they in themselves deserve damnation, but they are but appendages and degrees to the other sins.

Again observe, in the enumeration there is a special brand put upon the third sort, ‘Nor the covetous person, who is an idolater.’ *Πλεονεξία* here signifieth excessive and unnatural lusts; because it is put among the *nefanda*, and because the word is clearly so used Eph. iv. 19, and in other places is joined with words that signify unnatural and unlawful lusts not fit to be named: 1 Cor. v. 10, ‘With the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous;’ and Col. iii. 5, ‘Mortify your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.’ Certainly there is some reason why this should always bear company with these unclean sins; and what is it but that it hath affinity, and is of the same nature with them? 1 Thes. iv. 6, 7, ‘That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matters, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified; for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness,’ *μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν*, &c. We render it, ‘That none go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because God is the avenger of such.’ But the reason rendered, ver. 7, ‘For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness,’ will enforce another sense, not to yield to unnatural and unlawful lusts, to commit filthiness with his fellow-christians, in such a manner as is not to be plainly mentioned, or in that way of villany for which God punished Sodom, and hath exercised severe vengeance on the very heathens. This seemeth everywhere the meaning of a *πλεονεξία*, ‘inordinate lusts,’ which we translate ‘covetousness.’ Now what *πλεονεξία* is in the abstract, that *πλεονέκτης* is in the concrete; a man given to inordinate lusts, or filthiness not to be named. But this man, be he ‘covetous,’ or be he an ‘inordinate luster,’ is said to be an ‘idolater,’ as covetousness and inordinate lusting in the Epistle to the Colossians is said to be ‘idolatry.’ I confess this staggered me at first, and made me suspect my former interpretation, because covetousness is known idolatry; as ‘Charge the rich men in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God,’ 1 Tim. i. 17; and Job xxxi. 24, ‘If I have made gold my hope, or said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.’ This I confess



staggered me, and made me think covetousness is to be taken in the ordinary and vulgar acceptation; but I recovered myself again, when I considered that interpretative idolatry is when the creature is set in the place of God; which may be done two ways—by confidence and trust, and by love and delight; for there are two chief respects due to God—love and trust. Now though the covetous person in the ordinary sense is an idolater, as he trusts in uncertain riches, and maketh wealth his all, so men given to other sins, especially to the greediness of uncleanness, may be idolaters also, because they prefer their brutish satisfactions before God. And the apostle saith the same: Rom. xvi. 18, 'They serve not God, but their own belly;' and again, Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly.' Add, moreover, they may be called idolaters also because they yet live in the same villanies and abominable practices which heathens and idolaters do, and are very reconcilable to them; therefore I shall stick to the sense first given, many of the ancients concurring, and also divers of the most learned modern writers producing irrefragable proofs for their exposition, not fit now to be insisted on.

2. The predicate, 'Hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God;' that is, no portion in the church of God under Christ, nor inheritance in heaven; for there is both a kingdom of grace and of glory. The latter is especially understood, that kingdom spoken of, Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.' They have no right unto, and so living and so dying, never shall have possession of, that blessed estate. And it is called 'the kingdom of Christ and of God,' because this kingdom is now in the hands of Christ as mediator, and so shall be till the judgment be over; but after the judgment, he shall give up the kingdom to the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, or resign up the church to God, to live and reign with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever.

Secondly, The evidence, 'For this ye know.' In the original, *ἐστε γινώσκοντες*, ye are knowing. It is a Greek circumlocution, to make the sense more emphatical; as if he had said, If ye have the least taste of the christian religion, ye cannot be ignorant of this, that such filthiness and unlawful lusts deprive us of the kingdom of God; ye have been always taught this. Now this is added—

1. To show how heinous a sin this would be in them that have faith and knowledge, and yet indulge these kind of lusts; these rebel against the light of conscience, and wilfully forfeit heaven to please the flesh: James iv. 17, 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

2. To teach us that we ought to be put in mind of what we already know; for temptations induce a strange kind of oblivion into the mind, which is an ignorance for the present: 2 Peter i. 12, 'I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them;' and 1 John ii. 21, 'I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because ye know it;' and Rom. xv. 15, 'I have written to you, as putting you in mind.' Our work is not only to inform people of what they know not, but to inculcate and press known truths; not only to cure ignorance, but also forgetfulness, laziness, and dulness.

*Doct.* That it is an evident truth that all unclean persons have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

1. That there is a kingdom of God. This notion implieth, on God's part, his sovereign authority and right to command; and on our part, both duties and privileges. On God's part, 'One God over all, blessed for ever,' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who hath full right, as creator, to command and govern us with such laws as he thought fit to give us, with such rewards and penalties as he thought fit to annex to them. This right God never divested himself of, nor can it be vacated by our sin, but continueth still, while man receiveth his being from God by creation, and the continuance of his being by daily preservation and providence. There is *dominium jurisdictionis et proprietatis*. The dominion of jurisdiction is founded in the dominion of propriety. We are his own, for he created us out of nothing, and therefore hath a full right and title to govern us. Now God will govern us, not with a rod of iron, by necessity and force, but with the bands of a man, by laws backed and confirmed with rewards and punishments; for he will not violate the liberty of his own workmanship. Man, being a rational and free agent, is governed accordingly by moral means, induced to his duty by the rewards of obedience, and deterred from sin by the punishments appointed for the wicked and rebellious. On our part the kingdom of God implieth duties and privileges.

[1.] Duties. As in a kingdom subjects are bound to obey their proper and rightful lord, so here; God being our lawgiver and king, as he hath right to command, so we are bound to obey. As in the Lord's prayer, when we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we presently say, 'Thy will be done,' Mat. vi. 10. All that own his kingdom are bound to obey his will. So Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' that is, approve yourselves to be the faithful servants and subjects of God. Well, then, this is required of us, that we be willingly subject to God. All creatures are subject to him by constraint, the devils themselves not excepted, though rebels and grievous revoltors; but those are properly said to be his subjects that willingly consent to his government.

[2.] Privileges. There are many privileges belong to God's subjects, both for the present and in the world to come. For the present, that they are under the special care and protection of God, both as to their bodies and souls. For the souls, he sanctifieth them, writeth his laws upon their hearts and minds, as he did upon Adam's heart in innocency, and promiseth to do it in the new covenant made in Christ to those that serve and obey him, Heb. viii. 10; and so the kingdom of God is within us, Luke xvii. 21. And besides, giveth us peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. And then for our outward man, protection and maintenance. The necessities of this life shall not be wanting to those that enter into his kingdom: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' But in the world to come we enjoy our chief privileges, and therefore our estate there is called 'his everlasting kingdom,' 2 Peter i. 11; and Luke xii. 32, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' That is our blessed state, where we are absolutely free from all evil; therefore called the 'day of



redemption,' Eph. iv. 30, because all the effects of sin then cease, and therefore we enjoy all good. Every subject weareth a crown, which is sometimes called 'a crown of life,' James i. 12, 'a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. v. 8. A crown of life to show the happiness of that estate, and a crown of righteousness to show the sureness of it. This is chiefly considered here.

2. There is no entrance into this kingdom but by coming into the kingdom of Christ. Besides the kingdom which belongeth to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one true and only God, there is the kingdom of Christ considered as mediator; a new right of empire and sovereignty over the creature, not destructive of the former, but accumulative, as superadded to it, that the government of God might be the more comfortable and beneficial to us in our lapsed estate. This is called 'the kingdom of Christ,' because Christ, as mediator, hath purchased it: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living;' Rev. ii. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' And upon the account of his merit and redemption of captive souls, God hath bestowed it upon him: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' and Acts ii. 36, 'God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Made, that is, appointed, ordained. It is God's kingdom by original right, but Christ's by donation and purchase. Besides, it is Christ's kingdom because he is the administrator of it, both as to legislation and execution. Legislation: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth;' and John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' The mediator, God-man, is the supreme prince and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own terms, and his doctrine and faith might be embraced by all nations in the world. Here is a new power, new government, new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. Now this is comfortable and beneficial to us, because this new kingdom was set afoot to save and recover fallen man, who was disabled for his duty, and incapable of the happiness which God offered, and obnoxious to his displeasure. Therefore the kingdom and lordship of Christ is spoken of as medicinal and restorative, tending to reduce man to God, that after the breach we might again enjoy his favour, and live in his obedience: Acts xvi. 46, 'Preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.' He is set up to be king and lord, to make peace between God and man, who were at odds before. His right to govern obliged him to chastise us for our rebellions: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new Lord and king hath made a new law of grace, which is *lex remedians*, a remedying law, propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, granting thereby free pardon and right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him, but sentencing them to death that will not believe in Christ. Now without entering into this kingdom of

Christ there is no entering into the kingdom of God. These two are not contrary, but the one is subordinate to the other; namely, the kingdom of Christ is derived from God, and referred to him. The supreme right of governing is still in God, and our subjection to him is preserved: Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' And Christ doth redeem us that we may serve him: Luke i. 74, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' And besides, it is impossible that we can perform the duties that belong to the kingdom of God, or enjoy the privileges thereof, without entering into the kingdom of Christ; for he healeth our natures, and giveth repentance as a prince, Acts v. 31, or a new nature, as the foundation of a new obedience. Nor can we enjoy the privileges, pardon and life. Pardon we have not till we be Christ's subjects: Col. i. 18, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' As soon as we are brought into his kingdom, then we have remission of sins. Then for life: There is no access to the kingdom of God in glory but by Jesus Christ as mediator: John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Christ first took possession of it in our name: John xiv. 2, 3, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.' And so in due time we get possession also, and reign for ever with him: Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sat down with the Father in his throne.' After we have a while resisted the devil, and approved ourselves to Christ, we attain that immortal glory, a part of which is reigning with Christ, and dominion over the creatures.

3. The title or right to the privileges of Christ's kingdom is by way of inheritance. This word is solemnly used in this case; as Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'That ye may have remission of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified.' So Col. i. 12, 'Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;' and innumerable other places. Those excellent things which are prepared for us in another world are of the nature of an inheritance, not purchased by us, but freely bestowed upon us, by virtue of our adoption and sonship. God adopteth us in Christ, and receiveth us into his family. What followeth? 'If a son, then an heir of God through Christ,' Gal. iv. 7; and Rom. viii. 17, 'If sons, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ.' Our right to the heavenly inheritance cometh to us by virtue of our sonship and adoption, which is begun in the kingdom of grace, and perfected in glory. God, of rebels, at first maketh us sons, before we can lay claim to heaven and glory as our portion and inheritance. All the business then will be, who hath a right to sonship? If you search the scriptures, you will find that it belongeth only to those that



‘believe in Christ,’ who recovered our lost and forfeited privileges: John i. 12, ‘To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.’ Well, then, thus far we have gone. Inheritance depends upon adoption and sonship; sonship upon the grace of the Redeemer; and a right to the Redeemer’s grace we have by faith. But will every faith serve the turn? No; none but such as produceth purity and obedience; for the property of faith is to purify the heart, Acts xv. 9; and without purity of heart no man shall see God, Mat. v. 8. Again, faith produceth obedience; for the mystery of the gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26, and none but such have a right: Rev. xxii. 14, ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.’ Those that obey and fulfil the will of God have a right to be admitted into heaven.

4. By the tenor of the christian doctrine it plainly appeareth that whoredom and all uncleanness excludeth men from this inheritance; therefore unclean persons, and men given to unnatural lusts, have no right, and cannot, without usurpation, pretend to any hopes of this blessed estate. It appeareth plainly by these particulars—

(1.) Because it is contrary to that covenant by which all enter into Christ’s kingdom: Mark xvi. 16, ‘He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ Now baptism implieth a renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, and a dedicating ourselves to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our creator, redeemer, and sanctifier; and therefore by the baptismal covenant none can be saved but those whose faith effectually turneth them from the world and the flesh to the love, service, and obedience of God, so that they first live to him, and do hereafter live with him. And this covenant doth still bind them, under the penalty of damnation and losing the hopes of glory, to mortify and subdue the desires of the flesh more and more: Gal. v. 24, ‘They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.’ Those that are baptized into his name have entered into his kingdom, profess themselves to be his subjects; they not only ought, but it is presumed that they have, crucified the flesh. In what a woful case then are all those that obey the inclinations of the flesh, and suffer their lusts to have their full career, without check or stop, and take no course to mortify them, that do neither combat nor overcome, that live in all uncleanness and filthiness! They must seek another religion to comfort them, for christianity is not for their turn.

(2.) Because of God’s express exclusion. Surely they are excluded from this inheritance whom God excludes and Christ excludes. Now everywhere God has declared his mind not by consequence, but direct sentence: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, ‘Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God?’ These things are inconsistent with a christian’s duty and reward; and to flatter yourselves with a belief or hope of the contrary is to give God the lie. So Rev. xxi. 8, you have another black catalogue: ‘But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have

their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' It is opposed there to the saint's inheritance : ' He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' But they that will neither fight, nor strive, nor seek the assistance of Christ's Holy Spirit, that they may overcome their lusts, but wallow in these sins and vices, shall be damned into hell. So again, Rev. xxii. 15, ' Without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers.' Dogs are they that eat what they have vomited, and after repentance fall into their former sins. The other sinners are sufficiently known by their own names ; only you see whoremongers are not forgotten, but expressly mentioned as those that shall be without, that is, excluded from the blessedness of the saints. Now what can such sinners say for themselves against such express denunciations of God's word against them ? It may be they say they do believe in Christ, and all that believe are pardoned, and justified from all their sins ; but Christ will be no patron of wickedness. He that believeth giveth up himself to be sanctified and governed by him, as well as to be pardoned and reconciled to God. If faith be used to cross obedience, it is no true faith ; for ' Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him,' Heb. v. 9. To all them, and only them. If you believe Christ, you must believe that you cannot be saved unless you be converted to God. It is the devil, and not Christ, that telleth you you may be saved in an unregenerate estate. If a bare strong confidence in Christ that we shall be saved notwithstanding our sins were true faith, the hardest heart would make the best faith. Who fuller of confidence and foolish presumption than they that are hardened in their sins ? Therefore the business is not about faith and believing, but whether you believe Christ or Satan. If you hear Christ's voice in the word, this controversy is at an end. He hath flatly told you that you thus living and dying cannot be saved, and have no inheritance among the saints in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

[3.] From the heinous nature of the sin. It is a sin of great atheism and great infidelity. By the scriptures you know, or might easily know, that if you live in uncleanness, you incur the loss of heaven ; yet you are so violently bent upon the fulfilling of your lusts that this cannot reclaim you. Certainly faith cannot consist with these sins. A man may run blindfold into hell if he will wink hard and go on securely ; but he that will with open eyes run into the bottomless pit, he doth not believe the danger. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him ; and Solomon telleth us, ' In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.' If men that have reason and conscience had eternity in their sight and view, would they venture thus ? You never knew a soaken sinner in this kind, but he had ill thoughts of God and the world to come.

[4.] It is idolatry. Primary idolatry is when divine honours are given to any creature. But how is whoredom and uncleanness idolatry ? Because by it men are addicted to some base thing which they prefer before God. They love brutish pleasures more than God : 2 Tim. iii. 4, ' Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ;' and for the satisfaction of their lusts are deaf to all God's counsels ; that is our god who is most valued by us, and for whose sake we will do most. Now if men can dispense with God's honour and their duty to



him for a sense-pleasing and flesh-pleasing life, they will do more for the flesh than they do for God; therefore the flesh and the belly is their God. Now how justly are they deprived of salvation who put such a vile scorn upon the great God, our creator and preserver, who prefer the belly and the flesh before him! All their business is to have their will and pleasure for a while; but how long will they have their will in these things? Besides, such a base god as they have set up must needs breed a base spirit; for every man's temper is as his god is. As the psalmist saith of gross idolaters, Ps. cxxxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them;' so it is true of interpretative idolatry; this idol of carnal pleasure embaseth the spirit, and maketh them unfit for everything that is worthy, noble, and generous.

[5.] Because they have not that spirit that should fit them and make them meet for heaven. All the world issue themselves at length into two places, heaven or hell; and by the way they have a several sort of spirit that disposeth them to either. The godly and sincere christians have the Spirit of Christ; it is absolutely and indispensably necessary for them: Rom. viii. 9, 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' If you have any part in Christ, you are possessed with his Spirit, which is the earnest of your everlasting abode with him: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts;' for he stirreth up heavenly desires and motions, and putteth you upon serious preparations for a better estate. And it is God's wisdom to put all things in their proper places; and therefore in time, when they are sufficiently prepared and made meet, he will translate heavenly creatures into heavenly places and mansions, where they shall live with him for ever; for the grossly carnal, such as the whoremongers and unclean are, they are possessed by an unclean spirit, which hurrieth them violently into hell, as he did the swine into the great deep; and they are making themselves more meet company every day for the devil and his angels.

[6.] This exclusion is so absolute and peremptory that it admits no exception but that of sincere repentance, which is both a change of heart and life. For the present the exclusion standeth in force against you, like the flaming sword that guarded paradise; but your case is not remediless, because Christ is an all-sufficient saviour, and his sacrifice for sin so full and valuable that nothing can hinder you from pardon and salvation but your own impenitency and unbelief. Certainly this may be done, for this hath been done after a like sentence and denunciation, that no whoremongers have inheritance in the kingdom of God: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' It giveth some hope to a sick man when like deadly diseases have been cured. Surely an ocean can cleanse one nasty sink, and an emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Your case is foul, but it admitteth of this change; and if you yield to it at last, you may be accepted at last, after all your great and heinous sins. The covenant of grace doth promise pardon and salvation to every penitent believer whenever they truly turn to God, without excepting any person in the world; only you must look that your

repentance be sincere, and that there be a thorough change of heart and life. No other repentance is true but a quitting and leaving these sins before they leave us. Three things are apt to deceive you—

(1.) Some trouble for these sins while you go on still to commit them. There is no question but conscience will smite when the sin is past, and the fog that blinded the mind begins to be dissipated, and reason recovereth the throne again; it will pierce the heart with sharp reflections because appetite and lust have been preferred before it. All unclean persons are not past feeling, nor have gotten the victory of conscience; but though the soul be scourged with some remorse, yet as often as the temptation returneth they are still carried away, as marsh land is drowned with the return of every tide. Therefore in repentance it is not enough that there be sorrow for the sin, but there must be a forsaking and leaving of it: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.' These great and heinous sins must be forsaken, or else we are wicked men. Ahab wept for Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 29, yet afterwards imprisoned Micaiah. Saul with tears confesseth his injustice to David, yet continueth to persecute him, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, and xxvi. 2. There is repenting and sorrowing for sin in hell. The repentance is never sound till the heart be so turned from sin that it may be turned against it. If we have smarted for eating forbidden fruit, we must meddle no more: Ps. li. 6, 'In the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.' Broken bones must make us wary and cautious.

(2.) The next thing that will deceive you is some faint resistance or striving against sin, but it groweth upon you. There are some sins where striving is conquering, as in the case of infirmities that we cannot wholly get rid of in this life; but in the case of heinous sins it is otherwise; they must not only be striven against, but left, otherwise no difference between godly and ungodly. The *conatus*, the endeavour, is not enough; the *eventus*, the event or issue, is considerable. If a man live in gross sins though he hath strivings and convictions, and ineffectual wishes to be better and to turn to God, this sheweth he doth sin against conscience, and resist the Spirit, that should turn him from these sins: 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' Christ had his innocent reluctances, but his love to God and men broke through all. Take heed of being rebellious against the importunities of grace. Such sins must not only be resisted, but conquered. A usurper may reign though there be much contradiction. Turn the tables. Should the feeble oppositions of sin against the life and reign of grace make the saints question their sincerity? Why then should this ineffectual striving acquit you from the reign of sin? It is not enough to disuse sin, but he must mortify it also.

(3.) That which will deceive you is a hope to cry God mercy upon your death-beds; and so, after an impure life, men hope still to go to heaven. We do not wholly exclude a death-bed repentance (if it be sincere, and we do it at last); it is possible, though men have but so little time left. It is great folly, as well as wickedness, to put it off till then; yet if God renew you by his Holy Spirit, you shall be accepted. But all the business is to prove it sincere; for how shall we know



whether our repentance cometh from fear or love? What cometh from fear will die again when your fear is over. God hath not your hearts till he hath your love. Now this sensible death-bed work is hard, not only for the most skilful about you, but for yourself, to discern from what cause it cometh, whether you are frightened into an unsound repentance, or be effectually and sincerely turned from sin to God, whether your heart and will be changed or not. Alas! it is easy to renounce and detest sin when we can keep it and cherish it no longer, and it is the mere fruit of necessity and fear. Besides, what hope of this, when we are contented to live longer in a course of known foul sin, provided at length we may be saved? To live a sinful life against conviction of conscience bringeth on final and judicial hardness.

[7.] If the children of God fall into any of these sins, they lose not their right, but their present fitness, to enter into the kingdom of God and Christ. When you hear or read such a saying as the text, a doubt may arise in your mind, What then shall become of Samson, David, and Solomon? I answer—

(1.) One act doth not denominate a man, but habits; such cannot be called whoremongers. The reign of sin in the heart cannot consist with a right to heaven: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;' that is, in a course of sin.

(2.) They lose their fitness: Gal. v. 21, 'They that do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Our divines at Dort, by the leper who was to dwell apart, say that he lost not his right in his house, but his fitness to dwell in it for the present. Sins are bound in heaven till repentance. They need a new pardon, though they are not put into a state of condemnation again, nor their former justification nullified. Infirmities have pardon of course: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' But great and known sins must have actual repentance before they can be pardoned; they must be confessed and forsaken.

*Use.* Let sinners propound this to their choice, either these sins must be laid aside, or the kingdom of God must be lost. It is the highest profaneness this, to sell the birthright, Heb. xii. 6, to forfeit our glorious inheritance for a little brutish satisfaction. Will you for your unclean delights forsake the delight of angels, and choose the filthy pleasures of sin before the pleasures at God's right hand for ever more? The very punishment sheweth the nature of the sin, which is loving pleasure more than God.

To quicken the children of God to avoid all uncleanness and tendency to it. You should check temptations to sin, and strive for an abundant entrance: 2 Peter i. 11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Reason with yourselves, as it is said of the trees in Jotham's parable, 'Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, to be promoted over the trees? Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, to be promoted over the trees? Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?' So should you repel all temptations to sin, and abstain from all appearances of evil.

## SERMON VI.

*Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.—*  
EPH. v. 6.

THE apostle had argued *ab incongruo*, from what was indecent and misbecoming in us ; now a *periculo*, from the danger of such practices. There is *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, exclusion from the kingdom of God ; and *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, the hazard of God's eternal wrath and displeasure : ' Let no man deceive you,' &c.

In the text we have two things—

1. A caution, ' Let no man deceive you with vain words.'

2. A commination, ' For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.'

First, The caution is against error, and sheweth the certainty of their punishment, whatever false teachers whispered to the contrary. This is premised that we may neither deceive ourselves nor suffer ourselves to be deceived by others.

1. That we may not deceive ourselves. Frequent warnings are given against this self-flattery : 1 Cor. vi. 9, ' Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God ;' 1 John iii. 7, ' Little children, let no man deceive you ; he that doeth righteousness is righteous ;' 1 Cor. xv. 33, ' Be not deceived ; evil communication corrupts good manners ;' Gal. vi. 7, ' Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Men do what they can to live securely and undisturbedly in their sins, and to guard their hearts against the apprehension of all danger and punishment.

2. That we may not be deceived by others. There were false teachers in those early days, that countenanced profane and licentious christians ; some that taught fornication was an indifferent thing, or at least no such great matter, or not so dangerous ; that a man might be righteous, and yet live in sin ; that a bare profession of faith without a strict life was enough to salvation ; which poison was greedily sucked up by careless christians, who were convinced of the truth of christianity, but as yet had no power to overcome their lusts. It is strange that such gross conceits should possess their minds. But there is that which the apostle calleth ' a reprobate sense or mind,' Rom. i. 28. There is such an efficacy of error and deception in our corrupt natures, that men soon hear in this ear, and please themselves with the thoughts of impunity, though they live in gross sins : 2 Peter ii. 18, ' They allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.'

Secondly, A denunciation of God's wrath, ' Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.' You have it again, Col. iii. 6.



In which words observe—

1. The evil denounced, ‘The wrath of God cometh.’

2. The meritorious procuring cause, ‘For these things.’

3. The persons, or proper seat and subject of his vengeance, ‘Upon the children of disobedience.’

1. The evil denounced, ‘The wrath of God cometh;’ meaning by ‘wrath,’ punishment from God, who is angry and displeased with these sins. And it is said, ‘it cometh;’ it is an allusion to a thing that falleth from a higher place, and crusheth those upon whom it falleth. So this wrath is said to be poured down upon them from heaven: Ps. xi. 6, ‘Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup;’ that is, their judgment shall be terrible, irresistible, and remediless. So Rom. i. 18, ‘For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.’ They cannot make a wall against heaven to keep off that which shall come upon them from thence.

2. The meritorious procuring cause, ‘For these things,’ fornication, uncleanness, and such like gross sins. God is not severe upon ordinary failings and frailties, but these sins are of another nature.

3. The persons upon whom this vengeance cometh; it shall light ‘upon the children of disobedience.’ What children of disobedience signifieth I shall show anon. Some by it here understand infidels, as if that were the argument: How could these things be tolerable in christians, when they were the sins for which God plagued the heathens or infidels? Or rather, take the common sense; children of disobedience are such as live in an open defiance of God’s precepts, and will by no means be reclaimed, and forsake their sins, or be persuaded to seek after God, and his healing and renewing grace. And so it teacheth us two notes—

[1.] Those that are given to these sins are to be reckoned among the children of disobedience, or accounted rebels to God. Though they be christians in name, yet they are heathens, profane christians, that never heartily obeyed the gospel, nor thoroughly renounced their heathenish impurities: ‘As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance,’ 1 Peter i. 14. *Τέκνα ὑπακοῆς*, ‘obedient children,’ are opposite to these *υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας*, ‘children of disobedience,’ that profess obedience, and yet relapse into their old practices.

[2.] That the wrath of God lighteth not upon them that have once fallen into these sins, or it may be often, in their unregeneracy, but afterwards repent and return to an holy life, but upon the ‘children of disobedience,’ that remain obstinate and impenitent, and will not be reduced from this impure course of living.

*Doct.* 1. That all those words which promise impunity or immunity from the wrath of God to gross open sinners are vain words.

They are vain, because they cannot make good what they promise, being expressly both against the light of nature and scripture. And here I shall inquire—

1. What are the vain words wherewith sinners usually deceive themselves.

2. How it cometh to pass that such gross self-flattery can ever possess their minds.

1. What are the vain words or pretences by which they usually harden their hearts?

1. That God will not call them to an account, or punish them for their sins. That there is such a thought in their minds appeareth plainly in their actions to any discerning beholder: Zeph. i. 12, 'I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees, that say in their hearts, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' There are implicit thoughts and explicit thoughts; explicit thoughts are what we actually and inwardly conceive in our minds, and do expressly think of; implicit thoughts are the latent principles which lurk in our hearts, which, though they do not bubble up into actual thoughts and opinions, yet secretly govern us and taint our actions. And these are usually called in the scripture, 'Saying in their hearts,' and are known by interpreting and running up our actions into their proper principle; for man being a reasonable creature, it is supposed that all he doth is influenced by some reasonings of his mind, either more close or reserved, or more apparent and open. And now, though we in bashfulness and unconfidence of their truth for a while suppress our principles, yet their force and influence is too discernible in our actions. As, for instance, men that live securely in open sins, condemned not only by the light of scripture but nature, surely they are influenced by this thought, that either there is no God, or that he is careless of human affairs, and will not call them to an account whether they do good or evil: Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes;' that is, their lewd life sheweth that they have no reverence of God, and plainly bespeaketh this thought in their mind and observation, that either they think there is no God, or that he is a senseless idol, and taketh no notice of human affairs so as to call men to any account for them; for what could they do more wickedly if they were professedly leavened and plainly possessed with these opinions? But these are but vain words; for if there be no God, how could things fall into this order and proportion wherein we see them? Scripture and nature, reason and conscience, will tell thee there is a God. Look within thee, without thee, upward, downward, round about thee, everything thou seest, hearest, and feelest, proclaimeth a God to thee. And if there be a God, doth he not take notice of what men do? Surely there is such a thing as good and evil, vice and virtue, sin and holiness; the one worthy of blame, the other of praise. If it be not so, whence is it that we all affect to be counted honest and good; to seem so at least, if we have no mind to be so? The most wicked are offended to be taken for such as they are, and endeavour to cover their vices with the appearance of virtue and goodness. If all things were utterly indifferent in their own nature, it were no more crime for a man to kill his father than his neighbour's dog, or to rob and murder men in the woods than to hunt a hare, to lie and forswear in our dealings than to be honest, just, and sincere. Surely there is a God, and there is moral good and evil; and if it be so, will not God punish the evil and reward the



good? If you think he will not, it is because he hath no right, or no power, or no will to do it. You cannot say no right, because man is his creature, and therefore his subject. You cannot say no power, for our life is in his hands. Now if he will not trouble himself with human affairs, or mind what is done here below, if he is neither pleased with our good deeds nor angry with our offences, why then hath he made a law with a sanction? This is against all sense, reason, and experience. It is against the purity of his holy nature that he should be indifferent to good or evil, and wholly connive at the disorders of mankind. How then can we pray to him for mercies, or praise him for benefits? Or could there be any such thing in men towards God as fear and hope; fear that God will avenge their misdoings, or hope that he will support them in a righteous cause? Which yet is against the universal sentiment of all mankind and common experience; for God doth daily make known himself by punishments and benefits: Heb. ii. 2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,' &c.; Rom. i. 18, 'But the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' Acts xiv. 17, 'He left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' We see the effects of his wrath in pestilences, tempests, inundations, and of his goodness in fruitful seasons. Therefore why will you cherish such vain thoughts, as if God would never call you to an account, when he is known by the judgments which he executeth daily?

2. That God will be merciful to them; though they sin against him, they shall notwithstanding escape well enough; that he will not be severe against his creatures. But you reflect but upon one part of God's nature. his mercy, without his holiness and justice, and so fancy an unreasonable indulgence in God. You lessen his holiness: Ps. l. 21, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.' They feign God to be what they would have him to be, and judge of his goodness by their own interest. A good man is troubled and grieved and offended with the impurities of others: 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, 'And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' And yet a good man is but a partaker of the divine nature, hath but some strictures of it. Besides, you overlook his justice, which belongeth to his office as governor of the world, as if he would be merciful however men are qualified.

But doth not God deal with us in pure mercy, without any respect to qualifications?

I answer—We must distinguish between the mercy which God exerciseth as a free lord, and the mercy which he exerciseth as a righteous governor. The one is spoken of Rom. ix. 16, 'So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' The other, 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'So run that you may obtain.' There is a mercy that he showeth in converting some as a free lord, and a mercy that he showeth as a righteous governor, in

rewarding and punishing. The first is not that you depend upon, for you are yet in your sins, and care not to come out of them; and the second you cannot presume of, that you shall find mercy though you go on in your sins; for God, that is arbitrary in his gifts, is not so in his judgments. Mercy is for the support of the penitent. There is a duty God requireth of us before we can expect it from him: Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' It is their cordial and thy poison: Ps. lxxviii. 20, 21, 'He that is our God is a God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Besides, you abuse God's mercy, and put it to the worst use, when you think it shall spare all and pardon all: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' They only make a dung-cart of God's mercy to carry away all their filth; for God will show mercy only to true penitents: Ps. cxxx. 7, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption.' Mercy is wrested from its proper use to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning, and not to invite us to return to God. Well, then, according to rule, licentious persons cannot expect mercy, or they that impenitently live in a course of sin hope that they shall escape his vindictive justice.

3. That they are christians, and by external profession have received the faith of Christ. But the name will not save you without the power: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' Christ came to save sinners, but *from* their sins, not *in* their sins: Mat. i. 21, 'He shall save his people from their sins.' And you mistake the nature of faith if you think it lieth in a strong confidence, and freedom from trouble for sin. No; it is a hearty consent of subjection to Christ. He is not the best christian that hath least trouble, but the least cause for it. Otherwise to wink hard, and shut our eyes against all knowledge of christian duty and obedience, would make the best faith. No; this is a purifying as well as a comforting grace: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' And they are the best christians where Christ performeth most of his office in turning them to God: Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'

4. That none is perfect, and the rarest saints have fallen into as great faults, and so are persuaded that these gross sins are but frailties and human infirmities. *Si David, cur non et ego?*—If David fell, why may not I? was an old excuse in Salvian's time. They fell into sin, but did they wallow and lie in it? Will you live in sin, because in some rare case some of God's choicest servants have fallen into it? Is the rest of your lives like theirs? Did not they smart grievously for these sins? and was not their repentance as remarkable as their fall? Surely there is a difference between imperfection and wickedness, as there is between falling by the stumbling of an horse into the mire, and wallowing therein in our drunkenness, or between the drowning of fields in a land-flood, and their being overflowed by every tide.



5. Others say they are justified, and depend on the righteousness of Christ. You may, if you have a right to it; but, 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' Where Christ is made righteousness, he is also made sanctification: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' You have very great cause to doubt of your justification when you constantly live in sin. There are some sins which are not consistent with sincerity and an interest in Christ's righteousness; otherwise there were no distinction between the godly and the ungodly: but the scripture tells us the distinction is clear and manifest: 1 John iii. 10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God.' It is strange and groundless arguing, I am justified, therefore my sins of oppression, drunkenness, fornication, &c., shall do me no harm; but it is sound arguing, I live in ordinary wilful heinous sins, therefore I am not justified or sincere, nor can I by the laws of christianity look upon myself such, the scripture witnesses, as shall obtain acceptance with God.

6. That if they be in an unjustified estate for the present, they hope they shall repent at last, and then they will leave off their sins, and cry God mercy. But you live in flat disobedience to God for the present: Heb. iii. 7, 'The Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' And besides, you only presume of future grace out of self-love, but can be content that God be dishonoured longer, provided that at length you may be saved. And besides, you leave a necessary indispensable duty to great uncertainties. God may take you away in the next act of sin, as he took away Zimri and Cosbi, and Korah and his accomplices, and so leave you no space to call for mercy; or you may be smitten with an apoplexy, lethargy, or some stupid disease, that shall take away all opportunity of making your peace with God. If we were sure of repentance, it is great folly to play the mountebank with our own souls, and give ourselves a deadly wound to try the strength of a plaster or sovereign unguent; or drink poison, and contract a surfeit, in expectation to remove the distemper by a vomit. The presuming delayers are usually given up to hardness of heart, so as that they never repent: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' Therefore to defer the forsaking of wilful sins and known enormities is to run a desperate hazard in the most momentous case. The grieved Spirit may at length be tired and wearied out, and you may grow more sottish and blockish every day. Therefore these are but vain words.

7. That they do make amends for a course of sin in one kind by abounding in other duties; as some that live in uncleanness will be charitable, hoping to expiate the offences of a filthy life by charity, and so make alms a sin-offering, which should be a thank-offering: Heb. xiii. 16, 'But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' So some will be just, and do no wrong, yet cannot deny their intemperance: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If he trust in his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' that is, upon that account, or presumption of his other righteousness and good qualities. The apostle taxeth this want of entire and uniform obedience: Rom. ii. 22, 'Thou that abhorrest

idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' The Jews' form was abhorring idols; but they were entangled in a crime as enormous, and robbed God of his offerings. Most men's goodness is but to hide their secret indulgence to some other lewd practice or sinful course wherein they live. I say, to hide it, not only from the world, but their own hearts, as if our delinquency in some things might be excused by a supererogation in other duties; as the Jews hoped to repair their want of mercy by a multitude of sacrifices; as the stomach, when it hath no solid food, filleth itself with wind. But God will be obeyed in all things: 'God spake all these words,' *Exod. xx. 1.* The same authority that forbids stealing forbids adultery; therefore we must be complete in all the will of God. These are some of the sorry fig-leaves by which men hope to cover their nakedness, those sandy foundations upon which they build their hopes.

II. The reasons how it cometh to pass that such gross self-flattery can possess their minds. Though it be as plain as noon-day that they that live in gross sins shall be damned, yet the most profane have good thoughts of their condition.

1. The causes lie in themselves; as—

[1.] Self-love, which is very partial, and loath to think of the evil of our condition: *Prov. xvi. 2,* 'All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.' Alas! few bring their actions to the balance of the sanctuary, and desire to know the worst by themselves.

[2.] Unbelief of God's word and divine promises and threatenings. Unbelief and obstinate impenitency always go together. God hath his word, and they have their word. Now rather than believe God's word, they will put it to the venture and trial, whose word shall stand, God's or theirs? *Jer. xlv. 28,* 'And all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs;' that is to say, which shall be fulfilled and made good, their foolish confidence or God's threatenings?

[3.] Non-attendance to God's warnings, if they are not guilty of express unbelief: *Mat. xxii. 5,* 'But they made light of it;' *Eccles. v. 1,* 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil;' compared with *Acts xvi. 14,* 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.'

[4.] Non-application: *Job v. 27,* 'Lo! this, we have searched it; hear it, and know it for thy good;' *Rom. viii. 31,* 'What shall we say to these things?' *Jer. viii. 6,* 'No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' Now when men neither believe, nor consider, nor apply, no wonder if self-love carrieth it; and in the greatest soul-dangers they flatter themselves into a fool's paradise, that they shall do well enough though they live in their sins.

2. The devil joineth with our self-love, and lulleth us asleep in our carnal security and abuse of grace: *Gen. iii. 4, 5,* 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' In the first temptation he peremptorily denieth the terror of the curse, as if it were a vain scarecrow.



As the cunning huntsman playeth least in sight till the beast be gotten into the snare and toil; all is hushed and quiet, and then he appeareth with shouts and outcries; so Satan glutteth men with carnal delights, and taketh care their pleasures be not disturbed with any thoughts of the world to come, or serious minding of their danger, till they are past remedy, and then torments with despairing fears as much as he hardened us before with presumptuous thoughts of mercy. He that now tempts you to disobey the command, at death or sickness will tempt you to distrust the promise.

3. He stirreth up instruments, that, with the charms of false doctrine, he may hinder the sight of sin and fears of judgment, and strengthen the hands of the wicked: Jer. xxiii. 17, 'They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.' They confirm people in their wickedness, and keep them from repentance, by bearing them in hand, that God will be merciful to them; and if they can but trust in the merits of Christ, or God's mercy, they are safe. These are those that are said to 'daub with untempered mortar,' Ezek. xiii. 10, and to 'sew pillows under men's arms,' ver. 18; that is, lull men asleep in their sins. The church of God hath ever been troubled with such unskilful and unfaithful guides, and daubers with untempered mortar; and they are found in every party that delude poor drossy unsanctified souls with promises of peace and pardon, and by loose strains of grace hinder their conversion.

*Use.* Let no man deceive you.

1. It is sure you are not justified while you are yet in your sins. Men are first regenerated and then pardoned: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin.' Till you are converted you cannot determine your right. So in the golden chain, sanctification is one necessary link. It is not omitted by the apostle, but included in one of the things there mentioned: Rom. viii. 30, 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Sanctification is included in effectual calling; there is initial sanctification, and the progress of it is in the word 'glorified,' for it is a part of glory. You cannot imagine God can err in judgment; and justification is an act of judgment, as condemnation is; he deemeth and accounteth none just but those who are really changed. There is *sententia legis* and *sententia judicis*, the sentence of the law and the sentence of the judge; the sentence of the law is justification constitutive, the sentence of the judge is justification declarative.

2. How much God is concerned to right himself, the honour of his providence, and the truth of his word, against such as flatter themselves in their sins: Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' When men excuse or

extenuate the greatest sins, and the danger of them, when they think light of them, or presume of impunity, God is concerned to vindicate himself.

*Doct. 2.* It should deter us from wilful and heinous sins to think of the wrath of God that shall come upon those that live in them.

First, It is a powerful motive ; for God's wrath is very terrible. It is God's anger makes us truly miserable, and not man's. God is our supreme Judge, and God liveth for ever. Man's anger is finite and limited : Heb. x. 31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' The great and mighty men are afraid of this : Rev. vi. 15-17, 'The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, shall hide themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ; and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?' and the thing itself sheweth it. Consider—

1. The intension of this wrath. It is compared to a 'consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. It is a fire that burneth, not only to the ground or the surface of the earth, but to the lowest hell : Deut. xxxii. 22, 'For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell ;' that should not only manifest itself by visible judgments in the world, but invisible and unknown judgments in the world to come. There is often a standing out against God by our obstinacy and rebellion ; but there is no standing before him when his anger is kindled but a little. It can not only destroy the body, and those bodily things which gratify it, but it can light upon the conscience and the souls of men. Here if but a spark of his wrath light upon the conscience, what a burden are men to themselves ?

2. As to extension ; the wrath of God compriseth all those evils which are the fruit of sin, be they bodily or spiritual, in life or death, or after death. It is said, Deut. xxix. 21, 'The Lord shall separate him unto evil ;' ver. 27, 'The anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book.' The book of the law is full of curses to the sinner ; it hath a mouth to speak terrible things. But, Deut. xxviii. 61, 'And also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed.' What is written or unwritten, revealed in the word or dispensed in providences, by way of plague or punishment, that is included in the wrath of God.

3. For duration ; the wrath of God 'abideth' on the impenitent, John iii. 36, and that not for a while, but 'for ever.' We despise God who is an infinite good, and forsake eternal happiness for a little temporal delight ; and therefore the punishment is eternal. A wound may be received in an instant that is never healed. A man may suddenly slip into a pit out of which he shall never recover ; he may be in a moment bound with a chain that shall never be loosed. Now can we remain in carnal security whilst this wrath of God hangeth over our heads ?

Secondly, It is a kindly motive. That is a question whether it be so or no, therefore let us state the matter.



1. We are principally to avoid sin as sin and as displeasing to God: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' If we see not the evil of sin in itself as well as in the effects, we may be tempted to think God is unjust in over-punishing it. And true repentance lieth in hating sin as sin, for the evil that is in it as well as after it, as it is a repugnancy to God's will, or a transgression of his law.

2. We must abstain from it, as it will bring down wrath and judgment upon us. So God urgeth this argument, Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Not only our obligations to God should hold us to our duty, but our fear of his dreadful displeasure.

3. The *pœna damni*, to fear the punishment of loss, is out of question. *Timor separationis a Deo includitur in charitate*—A man cannot love God and not fear the loss of his favour. To a gracious heart this is more grievous than all the fire and brimstone of hell. The soul that placeth its happiness in acceptance with God, and the enjoyment of God, is afraid to lose him: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are confident, I say, and willing, rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord;' 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

4. The *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense, is necessary also to quicken men to their duty, and to guard their love, and to show that God doth not make little reckoning of sin; for, 2 Cor. v. 11, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' This is necessary in case of great deadness and numbness of conscience, and especially when a man is apt to miscarry by boisterous temptations, such as great fears and passionate and pleasing lusts. Fears: Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.' As one nail driveth out another, so the fear of God driveth out the fear of men and pleasing lusts: Rom. viii. 13, 'If you live after the flesh, ye shall die.'

5. The effect which it must produce is not such a fear as driveth us from God, but bringeth us to him; not torment, and perplexity, and despairing anguish (1 John iv. 18, 'Fear hath torment'), but flight and caution. We ought to represent it as a great evil, from whence we must fly by faith and repentance: Mat. iii. 7, 'Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' and Heb. vi. 18; to quicken us in our flight to Christ, and taking sanctuary at the grace of the gospel; and to engage us to more thankfulness for our deliverance by Christ: 1 Thes. i. 10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come;' and so keep at a distance from those things that may bring the wrath of God upon us.

6. Punishments on others are for our warning. When God's judgments are upon others for sin, his hand is to be observed with great reverence; as David: Ps. cxix. 119, 120, 'Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.' Naturalists say a lion will tremble to

see a dog beaten before him : Ps. lii. 6, 'The righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him.' It is observable in the text, he doth not say the wrath of God shall come upon *you*, but upon 'the children of disobedience;' for he speaketh to the Ephesians as believers, or persons justified and sanctified. And it teacheth us that the dreadful wrath of God, that lighteth on reprobates, is for our warning. Though we do not look upon it as the portion of our cup, yet we must look upon it as *debitum peccati*, as an evil that God doth inflict for such sins; therefore that sin ought to be shunned by the saints. God scourgeth and punisheth the wicked in our sight, that the regenerate may make use of their experience, and by their dying horrors, when they come to feel the effects of these sins, may tremble the more, and abhor those sins which are so displeasing to God.

*Use.* To teach us in what rank to place principles of obedience. There are several principles by which men are acted and influenced.

1. Some are false and rotten; as custom : Zech. vii. 3, 'As I have done these so many years.' Vainglory : 'To be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 1. Rapine : Mat. xxiii. 14, 'To devour widows' houses.' Envy : Phil. i. 15, 16, 'Some preach Christ out of envy and strife, and some also out of good will : the one preach Christ out of contention, not sincerely.'

2. Some are more tolerable; as the hope of temporal mercies : Hosea vii. 14, 'They have not cried unto me with their hearts when they howled upon their bed : they assemble themselves for corn and wine.' Fear of temporal judgments : Isa. lviii. 5, 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord?' Jer. ii. 26, 'As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed;' frightened into a little religiousness, when death is at their backs : Ps. lxxviii. 34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God.' To this rank I reckon also fear of hell, when it is alone. They shall be damned; all their duties are a sin-offering, a sleepy sop to appease a guilty conscience; all their repentance is but attrition, not contrition.

3. Some are very good and sound; as when duties are done out of obedience to God, upon the urgings of an enlightened conscience, without the bent of a renewed heart; for a regenerate man obeyeth not only as enjoined, but inclined. The principle is sound in the other, but the heart is not fitted. When a man considereth himself as a creature bound to obey his creator, whether willingly or unwillingly, he must do it : 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel : for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me.' There is a bond of duty lying upon us. But now it is better when it is enlarged and fitted by grace : Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days;' Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts;' Ps. xl. 8, 'Thy law is



in my heart.' So fear of hell : 'Destruction from God was a terror to me,' Job xxxi. 23. Hope of heaven : Heb. xi. 26, 'He had respect to the recompense of reward.' Their state of happiness is a state of likeness to God. These principles with others do well. So also thankfulness and love to God : Rom. xii. 1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service ;' Titus ii. 11, 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared,' &c. ; 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' The glory of God : 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Love to the work for the work's sake, when holiness hath our very hearts : Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' And then—

4. Some are rare and excellent ; as when we love God not only for his benignity, but holiness, and eye our reward for his sake, and love the glory of God above our own happiness, and can subordinate the happy part of our eternal estate to his glory : Rom. ix. 3, 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh.' Now we are brought from one principle to another, from rotten to tolerable, from tolerable to sound, from sound to rare and excellent.

*Doct.* 3. That their condition is of all most miserable who are not only sinners, but stubborn and obstinate in their sin. The wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

1. Who are the disobedient ? It may be said of two sorts—First of all, men in their natural condition with respect to the law : Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' And, secondly, of those that refuse the gospel : 2 Thes. i. 8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel ;' 1 Peter iv. 17, 'What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel ?' viz., those that will not submit themselves to God, or be persuaded to forsake their sins.

2. Now as to the disobedient sinners—(1.) They are slaves to sin : Titus iii. 3, 'We were sometime foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts.' They do what their lusts bid them, are at the whistle of a temptation ; but all the reasons in the world shall not persuade them to do what God commandeth them. (2.) They are of the devil's party : Eph. ii. 2, 'According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' (3.) They are rebels to God : Job xxiv. 13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light ; they know not the ways thereof, they abide not in the paths thereof.' They have light enough to condemn their practices, but yet they live in them : 'Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge ?' Ps. liii. 4. Their light hath no authority to bind them to their duty, but rather irritateth their corruptions : 'They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith,' Deut. xxxii. 20.

*Use.* Well, then, let us be none of these. A man may err and straggle out of the way through ignorance, incogitancy, or being overcome by the violent incursion of a temptation, but let us have a care of being children of disobedience. When we wander out of the way of our duty, let us look to God's word for direction in our way, and

follow the guidance of it ; as the wise men, that took a long journey to see Christ, followed the star that went before them, till it brought them to the house where Christ was, Mat. ii. 9, 10. [See this more largely handled in the next sermon.]

## SERMON VII.

*Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*—EPH. v. 7.

WE have handled in the 6th verse—

1. A caution, ‘Let no man deceive you with vain words.’

2. A denunciation, ‘For these things’ sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.’

Now I come to—

3. A dissuasion ; this is in the text, and is inferred out of the former verse ; where we have—

[1.] The evil dissuaded from, *συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν*, ‘Be not partakers with them,’ that is, do not join with them in their evil ways, by committing these and the like sins.

[2.] The reason, ‘Therefore ;’ that is, because the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, do not join in their sins, that you may not be involved in their punishment ; as Rev. xviii. 4, ‘Be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.’

*Doct.* The dreadful estate of the children of disobedience should keep us from joining with them in their evil ways.

Here let me show you—(1.) Who are children of disobedience ; (2.) The misery of their condition ; (3.) Why this should deter us from being partakers with them.

I. Who are children of disobedience.

1. Those who are not only sinners, but stubborn, obstinate, and ignorant sinners ; such as are prone to all evil, and are not only indisposed, but averse from all good. Both parts of the character must be minded. They presently do what lust biddeth them, and are at the beck of a temptation, but all the reasons in the world shall not persuade them to do what God commandeth them. They are as wax to Satan, but as a stone to God. They find an irresistible force in temptations : Prov. vii. 21, 22, ‘With her much fair speech she caused him to yield ; with the flattery of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.’ But as to good, they are not only weak and indisposed, but cannot endure to be subject to God. The more holy any creature is, the more readily does he obey God : Ps. ciii. 20, ‘Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.’ But for others, a small matter serveth their turn ; neither promises nor threatenings will gain them to their duty.

2. This good is either to be determined by the light of nature or the light of the gospel.



[1.] Wicked men are called 'children of disobedience,' because they rebel against the light of nature: Job xxiv. 13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the way thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.' They have light enough to condemn their practices, yet live in them: Ps. liii. 4, 'Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?' Yes, they know better; but the light hath no authority to bind them to their duty, it doth rather irritate their corruptions than break the force of them; and therefore justly are they left to destruction: Ps. ix. 17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' They do not improve the natural impressions of God, and the distinction of good and evil that is written upon their hearts; they drown the voice of reason and conscience.

[2.] Those that have heard the gospel, and will not suffer themselves to be persuaded to embrace the blessed offers made therein, nor will they give up themselves to the obedience of Christ. Their condition is more terrible, for these are desperately sick, and refuse their remedy: 1 Peter iv. 17, 'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' Their condition is more deplorable and desperate than that of other men; for they will not enter into the kingdom of God when invited thereunto, though they do so apparently need this healing dispensation. There are two things in the gospel—the doctrine of salvation, what God hath done on his part; and the counsels of salvation, what we must do on our part.

(1.) The doctrine of salvation, or the rich preparations of grace which God hath made for our recovery. On God's part, 'All things are ready,' Mat. xxii. 4. He hath given his Son to die for us, and to be the foundation of that new and better covenant wherein pardon and life are offered to us. But this is coldly entertained by many; either they do not consider it: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it;' or they do not believe it: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' or they do not apply and improve this blessed offer, that it may be 'the gospel of our salvation,' Eph. i. 13. There is not a cordial assent or lodging the truth in the soul: 'My word hath no place in you,' John viii. 37. Whatever general profession there is made of believing this doctrine, there is no room for it in their hearts, they believe it not heartily so as to affect it, and so as to build upon it for the saving of their souls. It is not received by sound evidence, as is seen by the little influence it hath upon them, by the doubts and questionings that frequently arise in their minds whenever they are serious; by their hatred of those that seriously embrace this truth, by the scorn they cast upon those that improve it to a holy conversation and godliness. Alas! generally it is received in the christian world, as it was said of the reports about Christ's resurrection, as an idle tale or vain dream: Luke xxiv. 11, 'And their words seemed unto them as idle tales, and they believed them not.' And the doctrines of Christ, heaven, and hell, and judgment to come are made matter of scoffing and mockage: 2 Peter iii. 3, 'Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' and the root of men's disobedience is unbelief.

(2.) The counsels of salvation, or what we must do on our part, that we may partake of the righteousness and Spirit of Christ: Luke vii. 30, 'But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.' There is the counsel which God giveth us, if we will have sin pardoned and be eternally happy. Many look to what he hath done for us; but they do not seriously consider what he hath required of us. We are to obey the counsels of the gospel, as well as to believe the doctrines of the gospel. Now what hath God required?

(1st.) That we should believe in Christ as the redeemer of the world, with such a faith as may make him precious to us, and value his grace above all the world: 1 Peter ii. 7, 8, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.' The apostle divideth the hearers of the gospel into believers and disobedient; and there he showeth what Christ is to believers, 'precious,' as the alone refuge and sanctuary of distressed souls, who are ever hungering and thirsting after Christ, and more of his renewing and recovering grace. The other party are the disobedient, and to them he is 'a stone of stumbling,' with allusion to them that travel by land, and 'a rock of offence,' with respect to them that travel by sea. They are loose and careless in this matter (we do not speak of every disobedience, but of wilful disobedience), they are 'a froward generation,' Deut. xxxii. 20. Preach and say what we will, it moveth them not; teach them their duty, warn them of their danger, all is to no purpose; they still reject Christ, and despise his benefits, and refuse to take on them his yoke, or embrace the noble and heavenly life. To the serious and broken-hearted, he is their life, light, food, strength, righteousness, and all; but to others a fancy, or nothing. Believing in Christ is God's great command: 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' Therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith;' Rom i. 5, 'Made known to all nations by the obedience of faith,' Rom xvi. 26; 'And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,' 2 Cor. x. 4. But the rebellious world little valueth God's authority; they are so addicted to paltry vanities, and their own will and lusts, that they slight the offered Saviour, and all the grace he tendereth to them.

(2d.) Repentance is another part of the counsel given to us. Christ told his disciples what they should do to perform their charge: Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' And the apostles pressed it on all that would enter into the gospel kingdom: Acts ii. 38, 'And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;' Acts iii. 19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Now repentance implieth an hearty detestation and renunciation of our former ways, whereby we have offended God, and a serious dedication of ourselves to his use and service. Now many regard not this, and though they hear their personal sins reproved, and the curses of the law denounced against



them, yet they hold on their course still, and cannot be persuaded to leave those sins ; and when God would heal them, they will not be healed, but are wholly led by their corrupt affections, and will not be persuaded to abandon their bewitching lusts : 2 Chron. xxx. 8, ' Now be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord ; ' (Hebr. Give your hand unto the Lord). We press men to return, and not keep God out of his right any longer ; but we do but water a rock, and seek to mollify a flint, that yieldeth not ; nor will they strike hands with God. We cannot bring it to a bargain or thorough conclusion, so as to lay down the buckler, and say, ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' Acts ix. 6.

(3d.) New obedience. This is part of the counsel of God to you if you would be saved : Heb. v. 9, ' He is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him ; ' Isa. i. 19, ' If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. ' And grace teacheth us, Titus ii. 12, ' That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. ' We should be sober as to the government of ourselves, righteous as to our carriage to our neighbour, godly as to the Lord himself, not defrauding him of his due worship, internal and external, love, trust, delight, reverence, daily commerce with him in company and alone. Though we persuade these things by the strongest and most cogent arguments, yet still there are some that will be intemperate, incontinent, that will not live soberly ; christians that will not live soberly, that cannot bridle the desires of the flesh ; unrighteous christians, that will not make conscience of giving every one their due ; and ungodly persons that forget God days without number. Though much of this duty be evident by natural light, and necessary to preserve a comely order in human society, yet neither restraints of conscience nor the laws of men or God will keep them within the bounds of their duty ; but men will be disobedient still, and run out into many excesses and disorders, without all shame, especially when they have habituated themselves to some evil custom and practice : Jer. xiii. 23, ' Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. ' Alas ! who is able then to preach away the cup out of the drunkard's mouth, or wantonness out of the heart of the unclean person ? Yea, to bring vain people to part with a fashion, or a recreation, which hath often been a snare to them ? they are brought under the power of these things, and cannot leave them. A child of God may err and straggle out of his way through ignorance or incogitancy, or be overcome and borne down through the violent incursion of a temptation. It fareth with them as with the wise men who came a long journey to seek Christ ; when they went out of the way, the star left them, but they stayed not there till the star appeared to them again. So God's people may straggle from their duty, but they do not rest there. But the children of disobedience cannot cease from sin in the several kinds wherein they are captivated : 2 Peter ii. 14, ' Having eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls ; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices : cursed children, they have forsaken the right way. ' It is their element, out of which they cannot rest.

3. This obstinacy and disobedience is aggravated—

[1.] From the person who is disobeyed. It is not our counsel, but God's. To weary and grieve men who do entreat them to forsake their sins and seek after God, is ill, for they must give an account: Heb. xiii. 17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.' But that is not all: Isa. vii. 13, 'Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?' They rebel against God himself while they shake off his authority: Ps. xii. 4, 'Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own, who is lord over us?' and refuse to accept his gracious offers: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It redounds to the contempt of God, who hath provided such an excellent salvation for us in Christ. You despise him that speaketh from heaven, as well as weary them that speak on earth: Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.'

[2.] From the manner of the persuasion, which is by the word and Spirit. In the word there are the highest motives to allure, the strongest arguments to persuade, the greatest terrors to scare men out of their sins. For motives, God outbiddeth them that bid most for your hearts; he offereth you an eternal infinite happiness, both for your bodies and souls. A little dreggy delight, profit, honour, or vain pleasure is nothing to it; it is not worthy to be compared with it. In other cases we would take the best bargain; here is life, and pleasure, and honour, for evermore: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.' Here are the strongest arguments to persuade God's authority: James iv. 12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' Christ's love: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' For terrors, God doth not tell us of mean penalties, but of a pit without a bottom, a worm that shall never die, a fire that shall never be quenched: Mark ix. 44, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Is hell a vain scarecrow, where the damned spirits are perpetually exercised with a bitter remembrance of what is past, a sense of what is present, and a fear of what is to come? If all this will not work, what will do? Ps. lviii. 4, 5, 'Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.' An allusion to charming for the taming of serpents, which were used in those eastern countries; not to approve them, but to improve a vile practice. Men will hold on their way, say God what he will to the contrary. See the words of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xiii. 11, 'But the people would not hear.' But this is not all. The motions of the Holy Spirit go along with it: Acts vii. 51, 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;' ye stop him in his sanctifying work, and refuse the help that God offers, which maketh it the more heinous.

[3.] From the plenty of offers. God hath called often and long: Prov. xxix. 1, 'He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall



suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' It is dangerous to slight frequent warnings; these are obdurate in their sins.

[4.] From the concomitant dispensations of providence. When our obstinacy and resolved continuance in sin is not broken by afflictions; as Pharaoh was Pharaoh still from first to last. Ahaz had a brand set upon him: 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, 'And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord; this is that king Ahaz.' God may break their backs by his judgments, but not their hearts: Prov. xxvii. 22, 'Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.' Spices bruised and pounded are more fit for medicine, but these depart not from their luxury, profaneness, and uncleanness, when they are not softened by mercies: Isa. xxvi. 10, 'Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' God shall not have their heart for all this; they despise his goodness: Rom ii. 4. 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?'

4. This disobedience, the longer it is continued, the more it is increased. There is a natural averseness from God. Take a man in his pure naturals, he hath nothing to incline him to God; but the longer we continue in it, we every day make ourselves seven times more the children of hell. Still it increaseth till it come to the height of senseless judicial hardness of heart: Zech. vii. 11, 12, 'But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ear that they should not hear; yea, they have made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.' So still they grew more and more disobedient.

II. The misery of their condition. It is either matter of sense or matter of faith; of sight, because of present judgments, or foresight, because of the threatenings of the word.

1. It is matter of sight, as God doth inflict remarkable judgments on obstinate sinners in this life, to teach his children to beware of their sins. These judgments are either spiritual or temporal.

[1.] Spiritual. These men are in a miserable and voluntary servitude both to sin and Satan; and both are the basest masters that anyone can have. To sin: Titus iii. 3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' They do all things which their lusts command, and cannot by any reason be persuaded to shake off this yoke. The less they feel this bondage in themselves, the more dangerous it is, and the more they are obnoxious to it; for then both will and mind is oppressed, and they know no better things. They that are slaves by force are not in so bad a condition as they that are slaves by consent, that sell their souls, their religion, their God, their Christ, their happiness, their all, for a little brutish satisfaction, and are so governed by their carnal affections that they know not how to come out of this thralldom, but suffer the beast to ride the man, and have gotten such an habit and course of sinning, that they are wholly enslaved by these brutish pleasures, and cannot help it. To Satan: The other master

is the devil ; they are of his party and confederacy : Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.' Their hearts are Satan's shop and proper workhouse, where his weapons of defiance are formed against God. They carry on a defensive war, shutting up their hearts against all his invitations to repentance and offers of grace, so that God can get no entrance there. An offensive war, as they do not only despise his offers, but hate his ways. Thus God hangeth up some in chains of darkness for a warning to the rest.

[2.] Temporal judgments ; for the wrath of God that cometh on the children of disobedience is not to be confined to the other world ; much of it cometh upon them here ; as when it is said, Heb. xiii. 4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge ;' that is, punish, not only eternally after this life if they repent not, but also temporally in this life ; yea, though they may repent, as is evident in David, who, though he repented, yet he suffered grievously for his adultery. If God's own children will act the part of the children of disobedience, they smart for it ; for this is necessary to prevent the taint of their example in the world. Well, but these judgments are not lightly to be passed over, especially when they are executed before our eyes, and God cometh near and close to us, for they are the holy and righteous dispensations of the wise God ; not things casual, indeterminate, or done at random, nobody knoweth by whom, or to what end and purpose. You cannot imagine that a holy, just, and wise God should have no end and scope in what he doth. The scripture calleth often God's judgments 'his arrows.' Now these are not shot at rovers, as the man that killed Ahab drew a bow at a venture. No ; God hath a certain and steady aim at which he levelleth and directeth his shaft ; and God's aim is our instruction. All his judgments are speaking lessons and real warnings, that we may not involve ourselves in the same sins, and so in the same punishment. They are appointed, not only for our admiration, but our instruction : Zeph. iii. 7, 'I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction.' God promiseth it to himself that the world will not be so stupid as to run the hazard of the same fearful judgments which have overtaken others : Deut. viii. 19, 20, 'I testify against you this day, that you shall surely perish, as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord ;' Deut. xix. 20, 'And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.' When any malefactor was executed, and found out by God's justice, he expected they should make this use of it : Deut. xvii. 13, 'And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.'

2. It is matter of faith and foresight. And so by this wrath of God is meant eternal destruction, which cometh upon them for their disobedience, which is a sin of the highest nature, and a chief cause of their damnation. At death they feel the sad effects of it : 1 Peter iii. 19, 20, 'By which he also went and preached to the spirits in prison, which were sometimes disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' They had God's word then, for Noah was 'a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 5. They had the Spirit then, for God saith, Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with



man.' Well, then, these children of disobedience, when their body is sent to the grave, the soul is sent to hell ; which the psalmist expresseth by being torn in pieces : Ps. l. 22, ' Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.' So for the day of judgment : 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, ' The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.' The great business then is to convince the reprobates of their disobedience. They see then how many warnings and invitations they have despised ; so many sermons, so many stings in the conscience. Those that despise his richest grace now, how glad would they be of one favourable look from Christ ! It is not simplicity that is their ruin, but obstinacy and impenitency in sin, for which they shall have no excuse or cloak : John xv. 22, ' If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin.'

III. Why this should deter God's people from being partakers with them. Here I shall inquire—(1.) What it is to be partakers with them ; (2.) Why God's wrath should deter us from this ?

1. What it is to be partakers with them.

[1.] There is a principal sense, and chiefly intended here, that we should not follow their example. We are not so ready to anything as to follow ill examples. Man is a ductile creature ; they had need be well resolved for God and holiness who are not carried down the common stream. The example of the multitude hath a great force to pervert mankind : Isa. vi. 5, ' I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' Eph. ii. 2, 3, ' The spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience ; among whom also we all had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind ;' 1 Peter iv. 2, ' That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' It doth at least take off the odiousness of sin, and reconcile the hearts of men to it. It is hard to be singular, and not to follow a multitude, though in an evil way ; for by common practice things are authorised : Gal. ii. 13, ' Peter dissembled, and the other Jews dissembled also with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.' Now lest this should prevail with us, the apostle would have us consider the danger ; we involve ourselves in the same punishment if we take not heed of the sin : ' Because for these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience ; be not ye therefore partakers with them.' God punisheth the disobedience of his people very sharply.

[2.] There is a limited sense of the phrase : 1 Tim. v. 22, ' Neither be partakers of other men's sins.' There it signifieth not committing the same sins, but being accessory to the sins of others. Some are ringleaders and chief actors in a sinful course ; others are assessors and abettors. Now how many ways may we partake of the sins of others ?

(1.) By counselling ; as Jonadab gave Amnon pernicious counsel how to fulfil his carnal and incestuous desires, 2 Sam. xiii. 5.

(2.) By alluring and enticing ; as. Prov. i. 10, ' My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' Hear God persuading rather than a carnal companion enticing.

(3.) By consenting ; as Ahab did to Jezebel's plot to destroy Naboth, 1 Kings. xxi. 19. His part was less in the sin than hers, therefore his punishment was less than hers ; the dogs licked his blood, but they devoured her body.

(4.) By applauding or flattery, and lessening the sin : Rom. i. 32, 'They not only do these things, but have pleasure in those that do them.' So some are glad when they can draw others to drunkenness, or inflame others with lust.

(5.) Conniving, contrary to the duty of our place : 1 Sam. iii. 13, 'I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Their sin was a sin of commission, but his a sin of omission, and so he came into a fellowship of the guilt. Now as we should not imitate the sin, and so make it ours, so we should not be any way accessory to these sins, and so be partakers in the guilt, as when we have power to hinder the sin and do it not.

2. Why the wrath of God should deter us from this.

[1.] Because of the impartiality of God's judgment ; he will not only punish heathen sinners without the pale, but christian sinners who profess and own the true religion ; for there is no acceptance of persons with God : 1 Peter i. 17, 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's works.' There by 'person' is meant either Jew or Greek, christian or pagan ; if there be any difference, it is worse with them, and wrath will come upon them first, because they know more of God's mind, and have greater obligations and advantages of doing his will : Rom. ii. 9-11, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentile ; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the gentile : for there is no respect of persons with God.'

[2.] Because of the greatness of his mercy. That God will instruct us at their cost, and sealeth our instruction on their backs, scourgeth them so sorely in our sight, is for a warning to us. And in this sense is that fulfilled, 'Prov. xxi. 18, The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressors for the upright ;' that is, God will make them spectacles of his judgment, that he may make us objects of his mercy. Now it is stupidity not to observe the instances of God's wrath on others, that we may not be made instances ourselves. David trembled when he saw Uzzah smitten, 2 Sam. vi. 9 ; so should we when God avengeth the quarrel of any commandment, as he frequently doth in his providence : Rom. i. 18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ;' and Heb. ii. 2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward ;' surely then it concerneth us to lay it to heart.

Use 1. To show us that we are not to be idle spectators of God's judgments on others, but judicious observers and improvers of them. Observe here—(1.) The use of observing God's providences on others ; (2.) The manner of it.

First, The use and benefit of observing God's providences is great in these particulars—



1. To cure atheism : Ps. lviii. 11, 'So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' They that know what to think of God's providence before shall find that God doth govern the affairs of the world as a righteous judge. Were men greater students in providence, and did they observe what judgments he bringeth to light every day, they would soon see that God is not indifferent to good and evil, that he taketh care of things below ; that the world is not governed by blind chance, but with great wisdom, and justice, and equity. It is not only the cavil of the wicked : Mal. ii. 17, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words ; yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him ? when ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them ; or, Where is the God of judgment ?' As if God did approve of wicked men, and were not a just and impartial judge, or there were no providence at all. But it is the temptation of the godly : Ps. lxxiii. 11-13, 'And they say, How doth God know ? and is there knowledge in the Most High ? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.' The poet Claudian—

'Res hominum tanta caligine volvi  
Aspiceret, lætosque diu florere nocentes,  
Vexarique pios.'

He much doubted—

'Curarunt superi terras ? an nullus inesset  
Rector ? et incerto fluerent mortalia casu ?'

But at length—

'Abstulit hunc tandem Ruffini pœna tumultum,  
Absolvitque Deos.'

He would no more call in question God's providence and the just government of the world.

2. To make us more cautious of sin, that we meddle not with it. God's judgments feed our holy fear and awe of God, and so stir up watchfulness and care for our own safety, that we may not fall into like offences, or do anything that is displeasing unto God. We have to do with a just and holy God, who we see is tender of his laws, a God that will not be dallied with. When he beginneth to execute his judgments against the children of disobedience, we should fear for ourselves. When Uzzah was stricken, 'How shall I bring the ark of God home to me ?' saith David, 1 Chron. xiii. 12. Will not God be so severe to me if I behave myself irreverently ? Certainly it is stupid incogitancy when God puts such examples before our eyes and we are not affected with them. The Gibeonites were more wise and cautious, Josh. ix. 3 ; when they saw the cities of Ai and Jericho destroyed, and their inhabitants cut off by the sword, they did not expect the coming of Joshua, but sent messengers to him, and by a wile struck up a covenant before he came any farther. Or as that captain, when two before him with their fifties were destroyed by fire, he fell upon his knees before the prophet : 2 Kings i. 13, 14, 'And besought him, and said unto him, O man of God ! I pray thee let my life, and the

life of these fifty, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties, with their fifties ; therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.' But our stupidity and blindness is such that we are not moved with these judgments so as to be more cautious : Prov. xxii. 3, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself ; but the simple pass on, and are punished.'

3. To humble us, and make us more earnest in deprecating the wrath of God, and suing out our pardon in Christ. We see sin goeth not unpunished. Alas ! if God should enter into judgment with us, who could stand ? Ps. cxliii. 2. When we see his judgments executed upon others, every humble heart will sue out his pardon. What miserable wretched creatures should we be if God should stir up all his wrath against us !

4. To make us thankful for our mercies and deliverances by Christ, that, when others are spectacles of his wrath, we should be monuments of his mercy and grace. Were it not for the Lord's pardoning and healing grace, we had been in as bad a condition as the worst : Rom. xi. 22, 'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God ; on them which fell, severity ; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness ; otherwise also thou shalt be cut off.' When the Israelites saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, they saw the more reason to bless God for their own escape ; and Moses pens a song of thanksgiving, Exod. xv. Our deserts are in part represented to us in the bitter experience of others. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not condemned with the world, and left to perish in our sins ; but that we see by their sufferings what an evil and bitter thing sin is.

Secondly, The manner of making these observations. This is needful to be stated, because men are apt to misapply providence, and to sit as a coroner's inquest on the souls of their neighbours, and so rather observe things to censure others than for their own caution. These pervert the providences of God, and speak to the grief of others whom God hath wounded. Shimei was one of this sort of men : 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8, 'Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial : the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned, and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of thy son Absalom ; and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.' As if God had been calling him to an account for the injuries done to Saul's house, and his rebellion against his father-in-law was punished by the rebellion and usurpation of his own son. Such bold glosses and comments do men put upon providence, and make it speak their own language, and so they pry into God's secrets without God's warrant and direction.

Rules concerning the observation of God's providences towards others.

1. Certain it is that judgments on others must be observed. Providence is a comment on the word, and therefore it is stupidity not to take notice of it. They that will not observe God's hand shall feel it. If we will not take the warning at a distance, and by others' smart and rebuke, there is no way left but we ourselves must be taught by experience. He that will plunge himself into a bog or quagmire, where others have miscarried before him, is doubly guilty of folly, because he



neither feareth the threatening, nor will take warning by their example and punishment. Observe we must : Amos vi. 2, 'Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?'

2. This observation must be to a good end; not to censure others, that is malice; or justify ourselves above them, that is pride and self-conceit, condemned by our Lord Christ: Luke xiii. 2-5, 'And Jesus answered and said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them: think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'

3. In making the observation, we must have a care that we do not make providence speak the language of our fancies.

[1.] There must be a due reasoning from the provocation to the judgment, *sed non e contra*; not judge of the wickedness of the person by the judgments on the person; as the barbarians at Melita showed little reason and less charity in misconstruing the passage of the viper that fastened on Paul's hand, that therefore 'he was a murderer,' Acts xxviii. 4. The dispensations of God's providence are commonly alike to good and bad, Eccles. ix. 1. By a sudden stroke God may take off the godly as well as the wicked. Josiah died in the same way that Ahab did, by an arrow in the battle, after being disguised, 2 Chron. xxxv. 23; Jonathan died in the field by the hand of the uncircumcised, as well as Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 1, 2. Did Simon Magus break his neck? so did good old Eli, 1 Sam. iv. 18. We cannot conclude some great sin from the judgment. No; our reasoning must be the contrary: Prov. xxi. 12, 'The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked, but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.'

[2.] Sometimes the sin is clearly written on the judgment, and the name of the sin is engraven on the rod wherewith we are scourged: Judges i. 7, 'As I have done, so God hath requited me.' There are some remarkable circumstances wherein sin and judgment meet: Obad. 15, 'As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee.' The judgments have a signature and impress on them. The Israelites' children were drowned in the waters; so were Pharaoh, and all his nobility, and men of war.

[3.] 'When the judgment treadeth on the heels of the sin, as Zimri and Cosbi perished in the very act of their sin; and Herod was immediately smitten with lice when he usurped divine honour, Acts xii. 22, 23.

[4.] When by the very means by which they hope to secure themselves, and so, whilst they think to avoid their danger, they hasten and increase it. The builders of Babel, being afraid of scattering, would build a stupendous tower for a place of retreat, Gen. xi. 4. God confounded their language, and by that means they were scattered. Jeroboam, to secure the kingdom to his house, sets up calves at Dan and Bethel, 1 Kings xii. 26-28. This became a snare to his house to cut

it off, 1 Kings xiii. 34. The Philistines threatened Samson's wife to burn her and her father's house with fire unless she would betray her husband's secrets, Judges xiv. 15. She doth so, and Samson taking his revenge; they fulfilled what they threatened, Judges xv. 6. The Jews being afraid lest the Romans would take jealousy of the people's following of Christ, consult to kill him, John xi. 48; and for that reason wrath came on them to the uttermost. Zedekiah disobeyed God for fear of mockage, Jer. xxxviii. 19-22; and the Chaldeans, when they had taken the city, put out his eyes, Jer. xxxix. 7. Thus they readily fall into those evils they would most gladly escape. Now it is much for the instruction of the world that these things should be noted.

[5.] When they fall by those means by which they seek to entrap others: Ps. ix. 15, 16, 'The heathens are sunk down in the pit which they made, in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand. Higgaion, Selah.'

[6.] When the word, *κατὰ ῥήτον*, in the express letter, is made good on wicked men: Hosea vii. 12, 'I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.' When the word doth fully take effect as it is laid down, it is fully accomplished; and the danger they would not believe they are made to feel. Thus 'every morning he bringeth his judgments to light,' Zeph. iii. 5.

## SERMON VIII.

*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord: walk as children of light.*—EPH. v. 8.

THE apostle having dissuaded them from foul practices, which would be a blemish not only to christians, but heathens, he now exhorteth them to walk suitably to their profession and that blessed estate into which they were translated. Change of state calleth for a different course of life. You were darkness, and if you had so continued, we could look for nothing else from you than the works of darkness. But when you become light in the Lord, you must 'walk as children of the light,' as those that know their way, and see their danger, if they go amiss: 'For ye were sometimes darkness,' &c.

In the words we have—(1.) An antecedent; (2.) A consequent, or an argument and an inference.

First, The antecedent, or argument, is taken from their present compared with their past estate, what they are with what they were. Formerly they were heathens, and did as other heathens do, but they were now become christians; and if christians, they should live christianly. Both estates are spoken of in the abstract, 'darkness' and 'light;' *scelus pro scelerati*. If we call a wicked man wickedness itself, we say more than if we only said that he were a naughty or wicked



person. To express the extreme misery of the carnal state, 'Ye were darkness;' and the exceeding happiness of the renewed estate, 'Ye are light.'

1. The apostle representeth their past estate, 'Ye were sometimes darkness.' But doth he do well to upbraid them with their former condition? I answer—He doth not upbraid, but exhort. There is a difference between envious exprobration and a christian exhortation. Upbraiding is a remembering the sins of others committed before conversion, with a purpose to reproach and shame them; a practice usual among base spirits, whose eye is evil, because God's hand is good. Christ representeth it in the practice of the elder brother: Luke xv. 30, 'This thy son hath devoured thy living with harlots.' This is sometimes done by the profane, who would fain represent others as bad as themselves, that their own practices may be less odious, because more common; or else in carnal professors, who would shine alone, and therefore envy the reputation of religion to others, yea, begrudge the divine grace vouchsafed to them. But a christian exhortation is a thing quite different; it is a putting others in mind of their former condition, to stir them up to more zeal and thankfulness. To remember it by way of exprobration is unlawful; it is to rake in the filth which God hath covered: Ps. xxxii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered;' a revoking as much as in us lieth God's grant of grace to them. Ananias objecteth against Paul his former practices, not knowing his change, Acts ix. 13-15. Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me.' Satan is called a slanderer, though most of his allegations against the saints are true, because he accuseth them of what God hath pardoned. But enough of this.

2. Their present estate, 'Ye are light in the Lord.' Where—

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light.'

[2.] The author of it, 'In the Lord.'

[1.] The grace received, 'Ye are light;' that is, filled with the light of wisdom and holiness. No question the expression heightens the sense; to be enlightened is a great thing in itself, but he speaketh of some eminent and glorious privilege bestowed upon us: 'Ye are light.'

But can it be used of any mere man liable to such imperfections?

(1.) It noteth not their perfection so much as the perfection of the dispensation they are under. Not their perfection, as if there were no darkness in them at all, but the clearness of the gospel which then shined brightly to them. There is a difference between the gospel and believers; the gospel is a perfect light, but we do but imperfectly receive it. Compare two places: 1 John ii. 8, 'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' This I understand of the gospel, which was then set afoot, as the sun risen and shining in our horizon. The other place is Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.' Not wholly gone, but pretty well over; day not altogether come, but it is at hand. This I understand of a christian in his mixed and imperfect state.

(2.) It noteth some good measure and degree of participation, but

not complete fruition. Participation it noteth, for otherwise it could not be said that we are not only enlightened, but light itself; not complete fruition, for those that are said to be 'light in the Lord' are presently called 'children of the light;' which doth somewhat abate of the expression.

(3.) It noteth that we have received grace, not only for ourselves, but for the good of others. He that is enlightened receiveth a benefit for himself; but he that is light is to shine forth to direct others: Phil. ii. 15, 'Shining as lights in the world;' and Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

[2.] The author of this grace, 'In the Lord;' that is, Christ; for there is, but 'one Lord,' as well as 'one God and Father of all,' Eph. iv. 5, 6; and whatever good we have, we have it from Christ and in Christ.

The light is said to be in him, and to come from him.

(1.) In opposition to Satan, who is the prince of darkness. The devils are called 'The rulers of the darkness of this world,' Eph. vi. 12; and their kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; but Christ is a fountain of light, and his kingdom the kingdom of light.

(2.) In subordination to God, God is light, and Christ is light. Originally God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; but derivatively Christ as mediator is light: John viii. 12, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' The Father is a light to whom no man can approach, and before whom the angels cover their faces; but this light is brought near to us by Christ: John iii. 19, 'Light is come into the world.' It is more comfortable to us, as it shineth forth in the person of the mediator, and so the better conveyed to us, he being one in our nature.

But how is this communicated from the Lord?

*Ans.* He enlighteneth by his word and Spirit. His word: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' By his Spirit: Eph. i. 17, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' The Spirit of wisdom and revelation doth open the eyes of their minds, that so they may be light in the Lord.

Secondly, The consequent or inference. From their change of state he inferreth a change of life. Therefore, before I come more particularly to discuss the force of this argument, let us a little see the necessity or need of this exhortation. For some might argue, If they be 'light in the Lord,' then what need is there to exhort them 'to walk as children of the light?' Is it not all one as to say, If thou beest a sun, shine as a sun; if thou beest fire, burn as fire? So some argued in Augustin's time, as if believers had no need of exhortation, because of the potency and inclination of grace. I answer—

1. There is a difference between natural agents and moral. Natural agents, *positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis*, inanimate and unreasonable creatures, follow the inclination of their natures or the tendency of their principles of necessity; but such as are endued with understand-



ing work with a kind of liberty and choice. Fire burneth where it meeteth with matter combustible, but a reasonable creature needeth to be exhorted to perform acts agreeable to his principle; for in reasonable creatures, though the inclination be necessary, the acts are voluntary; therefore though they have an inclination, they need to be quickened by counsel and exhortation. Though it be in vain for us to bid the sun shine, whether we will or no it will do so, if there be no impediment; yet it is not in vain to bid a reasonable creature to walk suitably to his principles.

2. Exhortation is God's appointed means, necessary for us while we are in our imperfect state. Sluggish nature is backward to good, and we have much opposite corruption in us. Earth would be heaven, grace would be glory, our way would be our country, if we could not at all obey the flesh. In heaven the being of sin is abolished; therefore there will be no room for exhortation, there is no preaching there, no calling upon men to serve God, no dissuasions from sin, no corruption remaining in the saints, no liberty left unto them of hearkening to temptations; that liberty which they have as reasonable creatures is swallowed up by the amplitude of their love to God; as the good angels have a liberty which doth not consist in an indifferency to good and evil, but in largeness of love to God, and a happy necessity of doing that which is pleasing to him, and an impossibility of doing otherwise.

*Doct.* That those who are called out of darkness to light have a great obligation upon them to walk as children of light.

1. I shall open the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light.'

2. Show that there is a mighty change wrought in them that are called out of the one into the other.

3. That it is good often to compare these two estates, and consider what we are by nature, and what we are by grace.

4. If this change be wrought in us, it must be manifested by a suitable conversation.

1. Let me speak of the two opposite states, 'darkness' and 'light,' and there show you that the carnal estate is an estate of darkness, and the renewed state is a state of light.

1. The carnal estate is an estate of darkness. So the apostle telleth the Ephesians, Ye were not only darksome, but *σκοτός*, darkness itself, for the greater vehemency of the expression.

[1.] The darkness of the understanding is ignorance; they are incapable of discerning between good and evil, know nothing of the nature and will of the true God. These Ephesians were given to curious arts, Acts xix.; they were the flower of all Asia for curious knowledge. But a people that lie in their sins, without the saving knowledge of the gospel, are in great darkness. A drachm of sanctified knowledge is better than all the curious arts in the world, and those most lawful.

But you will say, Thus he spoke of them as heathens; are all carnal men to be accounted darkness? I answer—Yes; they are blind and dark as to those things that relate to God and heaven. To God: Eph. iv. 18, 'Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the

blindness of their heart.' Whatever understanding and quickness of judgment they have in other things, yet they are gross, brutish, and wild in such things as appertain to God and their communion with God. And as to heaven: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' 'These things,' that is, the graces of the Spirit. There is a mist upon eternity, and a carnal eye cannot look through it. His eyes are not anointed with spiritual eye-salve; he cannot see these things so as to take off his heart from his vain pleasures.

But you will say, Many carnal men that live in the bosom of the church are orthodox, have good opinions in religion, and great knowledge of the mysteries of salvation. I answer—But this knowledge is neither accompanied with application nor affection to what they know. First, Not with application. It is not a directive light, to show them how to come out of their misery, or to guide their choice: Rom. i. 21, 'They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' It doth not teach them how to love, and please, or trust in God, as the heathens with their *τὸ γνῶστον θεοῦ*. So it is with carnal christians: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.' Secondly, Nor persuasive, and with affection, so as to change their hearts, so that they may seek after God in Christ. It neither restraineth evil, nor constraineth to that which is good. Light that is unable to discharge its office, to bridle corruptions, is but as darkness: Rom. i. 18, 'They withhold the truth in unrighteousness;' like a prisoner in fetters. It may talk its fill, but can do nothing. It urgeth not to good; they are secure and careless; they are Christ's, but prepare not to do their master's will: Luke xii. 47. It doth not overcome their prejudice against the holy and heavenly life: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The name is prized, but the thing hated, Christ's offices and government. Or else if there be any motion towards Christ, it is as their knowledge is. If it be a sensible, awakening, practical knowledge that we have, accordingly will our esteem of Christ be; but if it be a superficial speculative knowledge, either of sin or misery, or of Christ our remedy, our faith is opinionative and superficial; we shall not value him as a saviour indeed; and therefore it is not talking by rote after others which will excuse. There is a vain mind in every unconverted man, and a dark understanding which cannot do its office. Now this is a miserable estate, either to be altogether ignorant, or to have but a speculative traditional knowledge of the things of God; either to have no knowledge, or not that which is directive and persuasive. This breedeth doubtfulness: John xii. 35, 'He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth;' 1 John ii. 11, 'He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.' He wandereth in a maze of uncertainties, not knowing whether he goeth right or wrong, whether he be in the way that leadeth to heaven or hell; he liveth by guess, and knoweth not what to fear or hope for.



[2.] There is downright and apparent wandering from God. The Greek scholiast saith Paul calleth darkness *τὸν ἐν πλάνῃ βίον*, a life spent in error; for by their ignorance men run into all profaneness, and become very slaves of sin. To walk in darkness is often put in scripture for living in a course of sin: Prov. iv. 19, 'The way of the wicked is as darkness.' He compares the course of the godly to a growing light, 'that shines more and more unto the perfect day,' ver. 18; and the course of the wicked to a growing darkness, till it comes to the dead of the night.

[3.] Eternal misery is the issue and close of it, called 'outer darkness,' Mat. xxv. 30; and 2 Peter ii. 17, 'To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever;' because the sunshine of God's presence never cometh there; they are for ever separated from the face of God, and presence and communion with him. Well, then, you see one darkness maketh way for another—the darkness of ignorance for the darkness of sin, and both for everlasting darkness.

2. The renewed estate is an estate of light. Light is a quality pure and unmixed, and implieth both knowledge, holiness, and happiness. Knowledge, as it discovereth all things; holiness, as it is pure, and can shine on the filthiest dunghill without any stain; felicity, as it is the smile of heaven upon the earth. Light is pleasant. Surely this ought to be the more prized by us, because originally man's life is light: John i. 4, 'And the life was the light of men.' Man had a reasonable soul, but it is in a great measure eclipsed by sin. Now, to restore us, Christ's doctrine, which bringeth life, is also light, and the new man begins in light: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.' When once we receive the saving knowledge of saving truth, then all other things follow which belong to the spiritual life; such truth for the object, such manner of apprehension for the kind as may be saving. This introduceth and leadeth on other things. Because I shall have occasion to speak of it afterwards, I shall say the less now; only show you how great a blessing divine illumination is. Common knowledge of divine things is an excellent gift, though it be cold and weak, and doth not warm the heart with love to the thing known; but the grace of illumination is much more excellent to further the glory of God. The bare gift is used to the interest of the flesh, for fame and esteem in the world: 1 Cor. viii. 1, 'We know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' The gift, if it be single and alone, puffeth us up with a lofty conceit and vain ostentation of ourselves and a disdain of others; but the grace keepeth us humble, for the more we know affectively, the more we see our defects, not in knowledge only, but in holiness. And the grace is wrought in us by the special and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, and is not only knowledge, but wisdom, and maketh us serious, operative, and full of good fruits: James iii. 17, 'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;' begetting earnest desires and endeavours after the things known: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of

him.' Now when our eyes are thus opened, and turned from darkness to light, we begin to be serious christians : Acts xxvi. 18, ' To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me ; ' and carry ourselves as those that are affected with their misery and remedy. They talked before of sin as a thing of course, and were wont to marvel why men kept such a deal of do about it ; but the case is altered. God hath opened their eyes, and therefore they complain of sin as the greatest burden, and would fain be rid of it at any rate. They also seek after Christ as the only remedy ; nothing will satisfy them but Christ : ' All things are dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of him,' Phil. iii. 8. And they are resolved to venture all with him and for him : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls ; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Certainly then a great privilege it is when God doth thus cure the blindness of our minds, and open and incline our hearts to spiritual and heavenly things ; whether you consider—

[1.] The objects known are the highest and most important matters in the world. The knowledge of the profoundest science is questionless more than skill in some low and petty employments. As Themistocles said, To know how to govern a city is more than how to play upon a lute. But to have the saving knowledge of God and the life to come is more than all the admired wisdom of the flesh, or all the common learning of the world. Therefore how much are we bound to praise God if we may be light in the Lord ! It is more than to know how to govern kingdoms and commonwealths, and to do the greatest business upon earth. To know God, the first cause of all things, Jesus Christ, who is the restorer of all things, and the Holy Spirit, who cherisheth and preserveth all things, to know his heavenly operations, the nature and action of his several graces, this is the happiness and glory of a man ; all other knowledge is a poor low thing to this. Alas ! what are all the mysteries of nature to the mysteries of godliness. To know our disease and remedy, danger and cure, our work and end, what is to be believed and practised, what we shall enjoy, and what we must do to obtain it, these are the things do most concern us ; all other knowledge is but curious, and hath more of pleasure than profit. To know our own affairs, and our greatest and most necessary affairs, these are the things we should busy ourselves about ; other knowledge may be well spared. To know our misery, that we may prevent it ; our remedy, that we may look after it in time ; our work, that we may perform it ; our end, that we may intend it, and be encouraged by it, and what course we must take that we may be everlastingly happy ; this is the greatest favour can be bestowed upon us : we should beg it of God.

[2.] The manner of knowing. To see these things with clearness, certainty, efficacy, and power. Now this is diversely expressed in scripture ; sometimes to know them ' as we ought to know them,' 1 Cor. viii. 2 ; ' To know the grace of God in truth,' Col. i. 6 ; to get a ' spiritual discerning,' 1 Cor. ii. 14 ; to get not a sight only, but a taste, 1 Peter



ii. 3. It is a sweeter knowledge than all learned men have who are ungodly. Others may have more of the words and notions, but less of the thing itself; they have the sign, but true christians the thing signified; they break the shell, but others eat the kernel; they dress the meat, but others feed upon it and digest it; they dig in the mines of knowledge as negroes, but others have the gold. True christians take up religion out of inspiration, but others out of opinion and tradition; they have a divine faith, whilst others have but human credulity; they may talk of what they hear and read from others, but these receive it 'not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,' 1 Thes. i. 5. They are not only affected with the truths they know, but transformed by them, and changed into the divine nature. Now what a mercy is this, that when they might have gone to hell as witless fools, as others do, God hath given them counsel in their reins!

II. That there is a mighty change wrought in them who are called out of one estate into the other. A great difference there is certainly between the carnal and regenerate estate; they differ as much as darkness and light, as death and life, as the new man and the old: 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.' There is a difference between them and themselves, and between them and others; both are of respect in this place. Not, They are darkness and ye are light, but, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but ye are now light in the Lord;' because the apostle speaketh of the same men; and to this end it is spoken, that they may have no fellowship with evil ones, or be partakers with them in works of darkness. Now both these are proved by the same reasons.

1. Because they have a different principle; the internal principle is not alike in both. *Unumquodque operatur secundum suam formam*—All things work according to their nature; as fire ascendeth and water descendeth; fishes go to the water, and beasts keep on dry land; it is according to their nature, and that principle of life which they have. The saints have a divine nature: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature.' And the carnal are scarce men, because they are governed by their sensitive appetite, and so come nearer to the nature of beasts; and so the one are led by the flesh, the other by the Spirit, as is often observed in scripture. But you will say, There is an old nature in God's children, flesh as well as spirit. I answer—

[1.] By concession there is indeed a diversity or contrariety of principles: Gal. v. 17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other.' These two powers and principles are of contrary natures and tempers. By the one they delight in the law of God: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' and avoid sin: 1 John iii. 9, 'Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Yet there is corruption, which often opposeth and rebelleth against the new nature, so that its operations are much hindered and obscured.

[2.] Though there be an opposite principle, and though it impede, and hinder, and obscure the operations of the new nature, and the inclination of it be weakened by the back bias of corruption, yet there

is a prevalency of the better principle, which doth most usually discover itself in our conversations. *Principiata respondent suis principiis*—The constant effects declare the prevailing principle. As the children of Israel brought under the Canaanites in the land of promise, and had the chief sway of affairs there, so doth grace abate the power of corruption, and restrain its exorbitancies, that it doth not ordinarily break out. The man is not what he was before: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' They have crucified, and do crucify it still in their desire and endeavours, and gain more success against it. The work is not quite done, but it is begun, and carried on with an intent to be finished. Already there is enough done to bridle the corrupt nature, and to constitute a plain difference between them and others, who are wholly guided by the flesh. They are differenced from others by change of heart, from themselves by a change of life.

2. As the internal principle of our operation is unlike, so the external rule of our conversations are quite different, viz., the will of God revealed in the word, which they study to know and obey: Eph. v. 10, 'Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord;' ver. 17, 'Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;' Rom. xii. 2, 'That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'

III. That it is good often to compare those two estates, and to consider what we are by nature and what we are by grace.

First, That we ought frequently to reflect on our former woful estate. The apostle often directeth christians to look back: Eph. ii. 2, 3, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;' Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' God appointed ordinances to this end among the Jews. The passover to remember their bondage in Egypt; and the parents were obliged to interpret it to their children: Exod. xii. 26, 27, 'And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.' So the first-fruits: Deut. xxvi. 5, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous.'

Reasons there are for this—

1. To magnify the riches of God's mercy in our deliverance from that woful estate. We wonder at it more when we compare both together: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;' 1 Tim. i. 13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.'



2. That we may admire his power in the change : 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' That ever our sins should be washed and cleansed : Isa. i. 18, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

3. To keep us humble : 1 Cor. xv. 9, 'For I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' A man may be proud of spiritual enjoyments, so far as he is unholy : 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Now, to take us down and to humble us, let us remember the sin and misery we were once in when we knew it not. God will do much to keep gracious souls humble as long as they live. They were once as bad as the worst, and were children of wrath even as others. 'Though God forgets their sins so as to forgive them, yet they cannot forget them, but are humbled in the remembrance of them ; they condemn themselves when God justifieth them : Exek. xx. 34, 'Then shall ye remember your own ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled ; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' They set those sins before their faces, which God hath cast behind his back ; not to breed a distrust of God's mercy, but to humble their own souls. Though mercy hath washed, and justified, and sanctified you, yet you were as bad as others ; no poverty, beggary, and reproach in the world will be so humbling to them as this.

4. It maketh us more compassionate to others, we having once as blind a mind and as hard a heart as they : Titus iii. 2, 3, 'To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' We had as bad natures as any, and lay in the same puddle of corruption, were hewn out of the same rock, and digged out of the same pit, and came into the world as naked and destitute of grace as any others. Israel knew the heart of a stranger, therefore they were to pity strangers : Deut. xxiv. 18, 19, 'Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence ; therefore I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in the field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it ; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow ; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands.'

5. It maketh us more watchful. A man that hath escaped a dangerous disease or surfeit is very careful from his own experience that he doth not lapse into it again. Alas ! too much corruption still remaineth with us ; we still have flesh that fighteth against the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. Old lusts soon awaken at the knock of a temptation. Paul groaneth sorely that so much of this carnal nature was left ; to find such remnants of that odious sin, which cost us so dear, and had cost us dearer if our Lord Jesus Christ had not paid our ransom. We were darkness ;

but alas ! how dark are we still ! how far from heaven ! how little do we know, and believe, and love ! We know but in part, and love God but in part, and serve God with such constant weakness, and the old working warring principle doth often get the advantage of us, and produce some actual sin of thought, word, and deed, that we have need to take heed to ourselves lest we be again brought under the captivity and bondage of the law of sin. Shall we drink once more of the bitter waters ? Josh. xxii. 17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed unto this day, though there be a plague in the congregation of the Lord ?'

6. It doth quicken us to greater fruitfulness for time to come. Was I so zealous for sin, and shall I not do so much for God ? Rom. vi. 19, 'As ye have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness ;' Acts xxvi. 11, 'Being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities ;' compared with 2 Cor. v. 13, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.' Since we set out so late, let us mend our pace : 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

7. It maketh our conversion more evident and sensible, and so quickeneth us to thankfulness and praise. When we compare the two extremes, darkness and light, nature and grace, it doth much hurt to believers, in judging of their condition, to forget what they once were, and not to consider what they now are. The comparing of these two, what they were with what they now are, would make the change more sensible and evident : 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature ; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.' Old things are passed away, and are passing away still. Our gradual progress in holiness is more insensible, and therefore we may overlook the mercy ; but the first work is more sensible, we may find a great change in ourselves. All that belong to God may say, as the blind man, John ix. 25, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, I now see.' By comparing the two extremes they find they are not the same men they were before. Once they had no delight in communion with God, now it is a trouble to keep out of God's company. Nothing was so tedious and burdensome as the duties of religion, now their hearts are more agreeable to them, and they are sweeter to them than their appointed food. Before they were slight and sluggish, now they are hard at work for God. Before, they abandoned themselves to all manner of carnalities, now they are troubled about the first risings and bubbling up of sin ; the conscience which was stupid is made tender ; the stream of their thoughts, desires, and endeavours run in another channel ; their hearts are altered, life altered, speech altered. And by comparing these extremes it is the ready way to interpret our condition. Men forget the estate they once were in, and the great change which the Spirit of God hath wrought in them, and because such alterations are not wrought in them continually, live in doubt and fear. Look, as the forgetting our poverty and affliction maketh us undervalue



a more plentiful condition, and those comforts which we should have counted a wonderful mercy before ; or when we are recovered from a sickness, and live in health, we forget the tediousness of sickness, and are not thankful for the health which we enjoy ; so we undervalue, or overlook, or question the present state of grace, because we forget the unfruitful works of darkness, or the evil disposition and practices of our unregeneracy, and have not such comfortable apprehensions of the mercy which God hath bestowed in our change. Time was when you had little savour of the things of the Spirit, little mind to Christ and holiness, and were wholly given up to the pleasures of the flesh, and profits of the world ; but your minds and ways are changed, and you are not the persons that you were, and that will help you to interpret your condition before God.

8. It increaseth your confidence and hopes of eternal life : he that could take us with all our faults, and love us, and pardon us, and heal our natures, and reconcile us to himself, will he not give us eternal life after we begin to obey him, and love him, and serve him in our measure ? Rom. v. 9, 10, ' Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' You cannot be worse than you were at first.

9. It putteth an argument in your hands against sin : Rom. vi. 20, 21, ' For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness : what fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? ' and ver. 22, ' But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruits unto holiness.' Shall a servant of God walk as he did when he was a servant of sin ? Righteousness had no whit of your service, why should sin have any part of your service now ? especially if you consider how little fruit, benefit, or satisfaction your sins brought you in the time of enjoying them ; but now having given over yourselves to the service of God, sanctification must daily increase in you.

Secondly, We ought to remember what we were by nature, so as not to deny what we are by grace : Rom. vi. 17, ' But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Christ checketh Peter, John xiii. 10, for not owning grace. Though his feet need to be washed, God would not have us deny our renewed estate. Remember your past estate for humiliation, not for your confusion. Remember old sins and old mercies. So David : Ps. xxv. 6, 7, ' Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses ; for they have ever been of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' Not to tear open the wounds of an healed conscience, not to terrify conscience, but admire mercy, and to ' love much, because much is forgiven,' Luke vii. 47.

IV. This change must be manifested by a suitable conversation : ' Walk as children of the light.' We have the same exhortation, Rom. xiii. 12, 13, ' The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of

light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ;' 1 Thes. v. 5-8, 'Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober : for they that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.' Children of the light may refer to the dispensation we are under, or the grace we have received by it.

1. The dispensation we are under, as those that live in the clearness of gospel light are children of the day. Ye are not of the night ; walk as children of light, that have the light of the gospel, or becoming that most holy religion which Christ hath taught us. (1.) In the light all blemishes are soon discovered, and so our sins are without excuse ; whereas people that have not the gospel, or not so fully preached, are more excusable. Men might plead this, that they knew no better ; but now they ' have no cloak for their sin,' John xv. 22. Men have some cloak to hide the odiousness of sin from themselves and others ; their ignorance, their infirmity ; yea, the Lord himself doth pity men, considering their education, prejudices, temptations ; but the gospel holdeth out such convincing light as taketh away all excuse from wicked sinners. (2.) As they are without sin, so without shame, when they sin in the open light : Zeph. iii. 5, 'Every morning, doth he bring his judgment to light ; he faileth not, but the unjust knoweth no shame.' While the light of nature is not violated, sin breedeth a bashfulness and unconfidence ; but when men despise both the light of nature and scripture, they grow impudent, and lose all tenderness, and awakening of conscience, and outgrow the heart of a man. (3.) Sins are more dangerous and deadly : John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' It is an affront to the light that shineth to us, gives a double dye to our sins, and so increases our punishment and condemnation.

2. The grace received by it. Now the children of light are those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, have a new nature, and a sense of the other world. Luke xvi. 8, the 'lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely ; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' Surely they should watch and be sober, and plainly distinguish themselves from the carnal world.

[1.] To show their thankfulness for the grace received : Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

[2.] That they may not obstruct the new nature put into them, and hinder its operations, and so grieve the Spirit of God, who would work in them all righteousness, godliness, and holiness : ver. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

[3.] That they may obey the light, and comply with the sense of their duty written on their hearts ; otherwise they offer violence, not



only to their duty, but to their nature; not only to their rule without, but their conscience within, or the law written upon their hearts: Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.'

[4.] They have tasted of all waters, the bitterness of sin and the sweetness of grace, the terrors of the Lord, and the sweetness of the mercy of God and the grace of Christ; and shall they give way to sin and folly?

[5.] They are posting to a better estate, and preparing for it: Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Therefore for them to walk in works of darkness is more blameworthy, as if the way to hell would bring them to heaven.

*Use.* Remember it often to your humiliation, lest God permit you to remember it to your confusion. Those whose sins are pardoned may to their sense have their guilt raked out of its grave. It is possible the wounds of an healed conscience may bleed afresh, when we walk not humbly and cautiously. Though God doth not recant his sentence of pardon, yet the sin may occur to us, and ghosts haunt us of those who were long since buried.

## SERMON IX.

*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.—EPH. v. 9.*

THESE words do show both how and why we must walk as children of the light; and so are both an explication and confirmation of the former exhortation. An explication, what it is to walk, or how we must walk, 'in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' A confirmation, or new reason, as the causal particle, 'for,' sheweth. The apostle had argued from their profession of being christians. Now from the grace by which they were made christians; they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost. To be light in the Lord and to be renewed by the Spirit is all one thing; and if you be enlightened and regenerated, the fruit of this must be 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.'

In the words we have—

1. The author, the Holy Spirit.

2. The fruits of his sanctifying operations enumerated, 'All goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' This is the conversation that may be called 'Walking as children of the light.'

The three words may be taken in a more general sense, or in a more limited and restrained sense. In a general sense: Rom. xv. 14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness.' So goodness is taken for all saving graces; and righteousness for a preparedness to discharge our duty to God and man. As Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous, 'Walking in all the com-

mandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless,' Luke i. 6. And truth for sincerity, called elsewhere 'The girdle of truth,' Eph. vi. 14. Or in a more limited sense, so goodness is that grace whereby we are inclined to do good to others to the uttermost of our power: Gal. vi. 10, 'Let us do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.' This goodness is reckoned among the fruits of the Spirit: Gal. v. 22, 'Gentleness, goodness, faith.' Righteousness implieth justice in our dealing, which giveth every one his due: 1 Tim. vi. 11, 'Follow after righteousness.' Truth signifieth fidelity in our speech and actions, when we live free from lying and dissimulation. Now which sense shall we prefer, the general or more limited? It mattereth not much which of them we prefer, for they are not contrary, but subordinate. But that you may conceive aright of the words, let me give you these expository observations—

1. The apostle, for example's sake, mentioneth some parts of the holy life, not to exclude, but imply the rest; for there is a secret 'and such like' understood. When he saith, 'This is the fruit of the Spirit,' you must not think it is all. When we bring a sample of a commodity, we bring a little to show the quality of the rest, not as if that were all we had to sell; so these graces are mentioned, but not to exclude the rest.

2. He instanceth in such graces as concern the second table, kindness, justice, and fidelity, as is usual in such cases. The world is most capable of knowing and approving these things, but they suppose higher graces; for all our goodness, justice, and truth must come from love and obedience to God, and faith in Christ, as their true and proper principle, or else they are but moral virtues, not christian graces: Job i. 1, 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.' And Joseph of Arimathea was a good man and a just man, 'who also himself waited for the kingdom of God,' Luke xxiii. 50. When they are accompanied with these higher graces, then these things are good. Sometimes the new creature is described by the state of the heart, as it standeth affected to God and the world to come; so other graces, as fruits of the Spirit, are mentioned: 2 Tim. i. 7, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' Sometimes the Spirit is spoken of as it fitteth us and frameth us for our duty to man, as here in the text. There is not a more benign thing, that doth more fit us to live peaceably and usefully in human society, than the gospel spirit; and the world looketh to these things, and chooseth these things.

3. These are spoken of as in combination. We must not so follow after one as to neglect the other. Goodness must not make us neglect justice, nor justice, goodness; and in the acts of both we must be sincere and true. Some divide these things: Rom. v. 7, 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;' for one really performing what he pretends to do. Our duty to our neighbour is either negative, not wronging them; or positive, promoting their good. Justice bindeth our hands, and keepeth us from doing hurt to our neighbour, but goodness inclineth us to seek their good by all ways possible. And truth commendeth both. Righteousness keepeth us from the wrong that is done them by open violence,



and truth keepeth us from the wrong that may be done them by fraud and deceit. Goodness inclineth to seek our neighbour's good and benefit, and truth bindeth us to seek it sincerely, not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth: 1 John iii. 18, 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

4. I observe that there is a note of universality joined to the word goodness, 'All goodness,' to show this is of chief regard, and that we must not be good in one sort or kind only, but 'fruitful in every good work,' Col. i. 10. A christian should be made up of goodness; his very constitution and trade must be goodness.

5. I observe that these are called fruit, not only by a Hebraism, who are wont to express the works of a man by the term 'fruit;' for man is, or should be a tree of righteousness; but there is a distinction: Gal. v. 19, 22, now the 'works of the flesh' are manifest, but 'the fruit of the Spirit;' so also here compare the text with ver. 11, 'Unfruitful works of darkness.' But why is it called 'fruit?' Partly to show it is the native and genuine product of the Spirit in our hearts, as fruit groweth on a tree; and partly to show that sin is an unprofitable drudgery, but holiness is fruit. There is toil, here benefit: Rom. vi. 21, 22, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' There is no fruit in sin; the work is drudgery, and the reward is death; but holiness is fruit, for it is the way to eternal life.

6. All these graces, and duties consequent, are fruits of the Spirit. The Vulgar read *lucis*; some Greek copies, τοῦ φωτός; most, τοῦ πνεύματος. The Holy Ghost produceth this fruit in us; he worketh and dwelleth in the hearts of all those who are light in the Lord.

7. He speaketh of habits, not of acts: 'Walking as children of the light,' relateth more to the acts or exercise of the grace which we have received; but here the apostle speaketh of goodness rather than good works, of justice rather than just works. The habits give facility and easiness to all acts. When the soul is thus constituted, it is hard to do otherwise. So in opposition to the 'Works of darkness' there is 'Putting on the armour of light,' Rom. xiii. 12. The habit is opposed to the act, because the work will follow, when once the heart is framed and fitted for these things.

8. These are ascribed to the Spirit by the apostle for two reasons—

[1.] Partly because of man's incapacity to produce these things of himself. We are not only defective in the duties which concern our commerce with God, but also in the lower hemisphere of duties, those which concern our dealings with men. None is good of himself, but only God: Mat. xix. 17, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God;' that is, originally good. As all the stars derive their light from the sun, so do we receive every good and perfect gift from the Father of lights, James i. 17. God is originally good, but we are good by participation. This was true of man in innocency; but there is another reason for man in his fallen estate, for there we were altogether bent on evil: Ps. xiv. 3, 'There is none that doeth good, no not one.' Surely in that estate, whatever good we do is from the Spirit

of God : Acts xi. 24, 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.' We are made so by the Holy Spirit, not born so ; none of us love good, and hate evil, and sincerely set ourselves to do that which is holy and righteous, till he hath framed us for this use. Therefore all true goodness and righteousness is from him.

[2.] And partly because all the effects carry such a resemblance with the Spirit. The fruit must be correspondent with the root or nature of the plant on which it grows. If you are made light in the Lord by the Spirit, you will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Goodness ; the Spirit is called the good Spirit : Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me, for thou art my God ; thy Spirit is good ; lead me into the land of uprightness ;' Neh. ix. 20, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' Now this operation is accordingly ; he maketh us good, kind, to love all with a love of benevolence, and our fellow-christians with a love of complacency. So for righteousness, or justice in all our dealings, giving every one his due ; this is the fruit of the Spirit ; for, Eph. iv. 24, 'The new man is created after God in righteousness and true holiness.' God hath done so much to demonstrate his righteousness, that christians have not the spirit of their religion if they be not righteous. So for truth or fidelity, whereby we carry ourselves sincerely, and free from all hypocrisy and craft. The Spirit is often called the Spirit of truth ; and that holiness which he worketh in us is holiness of truth, or true holiness : 'Therefore put away lying,' Eph. iv. 25 ; it is a sin contrary to the new nature.

9. This Spirit God hath sent among us by the preaching of the gospel ; for when he saith, 'Ye are light in the Lord,' it implieth both the knowledge of the gospel and the illumination of the Spirit ; the one as concomitant with the other, and settling the belief of it in our hearts. The doctrine of Christ bringeth the Spirit to us, and we receive it by faith : Gal. iii. 2, 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?' John vii. 39, 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' We receive the Spirit more plentifully by the gospel than by the law, and we receive it by faith in Christ. Having made this way, I come now to propound a particular point.

*Doct. 1.* That the Spirit which we receive by the gospel worketh all goodness in the hearts of believers.

To illustrate this point, I shall show—(1.) What is goodness ; (2.) How this is the product of the Spirit of the gospel.

I. What is goodness ? I answer—Goodness is either moral or beneficial.

1. Moral goodness is our whole duty required by the law of God, whatever is just and equal for us to perform : Deut. xxx. 15, 'I have set before you life and good, death and evil.' Holiness is called good, and sin evil ; and the whole duty of man elsewhere is called good : Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee ?' The *totum hominis*, the whole duty of man, is *bonum hominis*, the whole good of man.

2. There is beneficial goodness, which is a branch of the former, and implieth a readiness to do good to others to the utmost of our capacity ;



for all good is communicative of itself: Heb. xiii. 16, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' This duty must not be forgotten nor neglected, because it sheweth the due impress of our religion upon us. Well, then, the first sort of goodness is holiness, the second beneficence.

II. That this is the fruit and product of the Spirit by the gospel.

1. Let us see what the gospel doth to promote this goodness in the world.

2. Upon what grounds we may expect the Spirit to co-operate therewith.

First, What the gospel doth to promote this goodness in the world.

1. By the laws and precepts of it, or the duties it requireth; it requireth us to be good, and to do good.

[1.] To be good; for we are first made good before we can do good: Luke vi. 45, 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Every man hath a treasury or store-house within him, from whence all his actions are brought forth. He that hath an honest heart, or a repository of good purposes and resolutions, in short, whose whole heart is set upon doing good on all occasions, he bringeth forth from thence good actions. Now the design of the christian religion is to make men good and to cure them of all evil; it not only inviteth and persuadeth men to be good, but offereth grace whereby they may become good: Eph. ii. 10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' It offereth grace, whereby men may be changed; and being naturally bent to evil, may be disposed and inclined to good. This religion would not have us do good by accident, but by nature, as having our hearts set towards it; and to work not occasionally, but from a habit and a principle of goodness in ourselves, as being thus constituted and framed that we may do it easily and with delight; yea, it is a force if we do the contrary.

[2.] To do good, both as to God and men.

(1.) As to God, the great duty is love; that we should love him, and obey him as our rightful Lord and chief good and happiness. This was our primitive duty, which we owed to our creator; and Christ came not to dissolve, but to establish it. He never intended to rob God of a creature when he made any man a christian; for he 'redeemed us to God by his blood,' Rev. v. 9. That we might love him and serve him; love him with all our hearts, and serve him with all our might, Mat. xxii. 37. Oh, what a good religion is this, where our principal work is love and delight in him whom we serve and worship! We begin our happiness in our duty and love to God, that we may be beloved of him. Whole christianity is but an holy art to teach us the way of loving and enjoying God.

(2.) To do good to men. Certainly that religion is good which only employeth men in doing good, and obligeth us to seek the welfare of others as we would do our own. It enjoineth us 'to do good to all, especially to the household of faith,' Gal. vi. 10. We cannot take delight in all, for some are an offence to the new nature which is in us; but we must do good to all, and seek their happiness. The love

of benevolence or good will is opposite to the hatred of enmity, and the love of complacency and delight to the hatred of aversation and offence. We cannot take pleasure in sinners, but yet must do them good. Suppose they have disoblged us, yet enemies are not excepted: Mat. v. 44, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.' None can be such enemies to us as we were to God in our natural estate. Now it is the duty of a christian to revenge injuries with courtesies: Rom. xii. 14, 'Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not; and ver. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' This doing good God expecteth from men in every capacity and relation. The magistrate is 'the minister of God to thee for good,' Rom. xiii. 4. He is not so much to mind his own greatness as the public benefit. The minister is to seek the good of souls, 'to impart some spiritual gift,' Rom. i. 11, to be an instrument of increasing light or life. Fellow-christians should seek to do good one to another, and value all their talents, not by possession, but use: Luke xvi. 8, 'The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.' People in an inferior quality, as servants: Eph. vi. 8, 'Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' If they make conscience of doing good in their callings and relations, and go about these duties as service to God, and profitable to men, it is a good thing, and accepted by the Lord. Thus the gospel requireth we should still be doing good, something that conduceth to the glory of God and the benefit of others.

2. By the discoveries it maketh. The greatest, truest, and fullest prospect of God's goodness to mankind we have in the gospel. There 'the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared,' Titus iii. 4. When God was displeased for the breach of the first covenant, and man had fallen from his primitive holiness, and brought himself irreparably under guilt and a curse, the Lord took occasion by his misery to open a door of hope to us by Christ, and hath set up a new covenant of righteousness and life founded on the death of his Son, where grace taketh the throne, and the judge is Christ, and the rule is the gospel, and pardon and salvation is offered to all those who with a ready and thankful mind are willing to return to their obedience to God; and God standeth with open arms to receive all those that run for refuge to this covenant, and take sanctuary at this grace, as willing to bestow upon them all kind of mercies and grace to help. Surely this word may well be called 'the good word of God,' Heb. vi. 5, and 'the glad tidings of good things,' Rom. x. 15, the best news that ever was brought to man's ear. Now the impress should be according to the seal; a good religion should breed a good people. When such wonders of goodness are discovered, it should make us more ready for our duty to God and man.

[1.] To God. The love and goodness of God in Christ is the great engine of the gospel, and the great motive and encouragement to persuade us to our duty: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' God would be obeyed by his people, not as slaves, but as children, and



would have the spring and rise of our obedience to be love and gratitude; therefore doth he oblige us at so high a rate, and carry on the tenor of his grace and mercy in such an astonishing and wonderful way, that none of his commandments might be grievous to us, being sweetened by his love. He will be served, not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; not with a grudging mind, but with delight and readiness; not as doing good by force, but as encouraged with a deep sense of this goodness.

[2.] To men. Surely we will imitate what we prize and esteem. No man can be thankful to God who is not merciful to his brother; so much goodness demonstrated will breed goodness in us. When the apostle had asked a contribution to the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem, he useth this argument, 2 Cor. viii. 8, 9, 'I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love; for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' Christians can want no motives to goodness when they consider the liberality and bounty of God to them in Christ, and those riches of grace provided for them. If they sincerely believe these things, they will have somewhat in their own bosoms that will strongly persuade them not to be wanting to occasions and opportunities of doing good.

3. The examples it propoundeth to our imitation, not mean and blemished ones, such as we may find among our fellow-creatures, but the high and glorious examples of God and Christ himself. There is a good God set before us, that we may not take up with any low pattern of goodness. He is represented to us as all goodness: Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good.' He is good in his nature, and his work is agreeable to his nature; nothing is wanting to it, or defective in it. Nothing can be added to it to make it better. Ὁ ὄντως ὄν τὸ πρῶτον—Philo. The first being must needs be the first good. As soon as we conceive there is a God, we presently conceive that he is good, as being both the fountain and pattern of all the good that is in the creatures.

[1.] As to his nature, he is originally good, good in himself, and good to others; as the sun hath light in himself, and giveth light to all other things. Essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality or superadded gift; but in God it is not a quality, but his essence; as a vessel that is gilded with gold, and a vessel that is all gold; the gilding or lustre is a superadded quality; but in a vessel all of gold, the lustre and the substance is the same. God is infinitely good; the creature's good is limited, but there is nothing to limit the perfection of God, or give it any measure. He is an ocean of goodness without banks or bottom. Alas! what is our drop to this ocean! God is immutably good; his goodness can never be more or less than it is; as there can be no addition to it, so no subtraction from it. Man in his innocency was *peccabilis*, afterward *peccator*; but God ever was and is good. Now this is the pattern propounded to us, but his nature is a great deep. Therefore—

[2.] As to his work, he doeth good. What hath God been acting

upon the great theatre of the world but goodness for these six thousand years? Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he hath not left himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' He left not himself without a witness, *ἀγαθοποιῶν*, not by taking vengeance of their idolatries, but by inviting benefits. Now this is propounded to our imitation, that our whole life may be nothing else but doing good: Mat. v. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' It is in Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;' that is, learn of God how to exercise and show forth your goodness, not in a confined way to friends only, but to enemies; not in a scanty measure, but in full proportion. The other example is Jesus Christ, or God incarnate: Acts x. 38, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good;' that is, to the bodies and souls of men, giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, and life to the dead. Christ did nothing by way of malice and revenge, he used not the power that he had to make men blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily do it, and justly might have done it. No; he went up and down doing good. He rebuked his disciples when they requested him to destroy those that had condemned them by calling for fire from heaven, telling them, 'They knew not of what spirit they were of,' &c., Luke ix. 55, 56. It was unlike his spirit and design; all his miracles were acts of relief and succour, not pompous nor destructive, bating only his blasting of the unfruitful fig-tree, which was an emblematical warning to the Jews, and suffering the devil's entering into the herd of swine, which was a necessary demonstration of the devil's malice and destructive cruelty, who, if he could not afflict men and destroy men, would enter into the herd of swine that the poor creatures might perish in the sea. I say nothing now of his abundant grace discovered in our redemption. Surely if it be true religion to be like what we worship as God, we must be like this God and this Christ. Certainly goodness should wholly possess us, and dispose of our lives and actions; a religion that holdeth forth such a good God and a good Christ should breed a good people.

4. The arguments by which it enforceth this goodness, or the rewards and encouragements which it offereth, which is the supreme blessedness or the chief good. We all desire good; any good will serve a carnal brutish heart: Ps. iv. 6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' but the sober and thinking part of mankind will not be put off so; they are groping and feeling about for an eternal good; and grope they may, but still fail of what they seek after, till they come to the gospel to find it. There God hath showed man what is his chief good and proper happiness, or the greatest good that can be attained or imagined, for beyond God there is nothing. And the happiness which the gospel offereth is—

[1.] God reconciled.

[2.] God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness by the way consists in reconciliation with God, but at the end of the journey, in the vision and fruition of God; this is happiness indeed.

(1.) Our reconciliation with God through Christ, as soon as we



enter into his peace. This is that which we only are capable of here, and the good we are now only admitted unto: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' As soon as ever we turn to him by faith and repentance, he giveth us the pardon of all our sins, and accepteth us in Christ. The sentence of death is reversed, and we are delivered from wrath to come; and not only so, but are also made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We have a right for the present, though not the possession; and there is a long train of blessings which we enjoy by virtue of this right, as a comfortable sense of the love of God, peace in our own conscience, an interest in the care of God's providence, the audience of our prayers, the moderating and sanctifying of all our afflictions. Now all these should mollify and soften the heart, and melt it into love to God and man. Shall God be so good to us, and we so evil? Surely such a lively sense of God's love and grace should highly and potently promote goodness in the world.

(2.) The vision and fruition of God in the heavenly glory, that is the great good offered to us, when our nature shall be perfected, and by its most perfect acts be employed about the most perfect objects, and God shall be all in all, giving out the fullest communications of his grace, and that for ever. The soul shall be perfect without spot or blemish, and this vile body made like Christ's glorious body, and we shall for ever remain in the sight and love of God; and what is sweeter than his presence? Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' And this without fear of change: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord.' If anything be good, this is good, to live for ever in the sight of God, and to love him, and be beloved of him. Now should not all this make us good? and should we not train up ourselves in a way of loving and rejoicing in God now, that in our very work we may have a foretaste of our reward and end? The object of our love and service is good, and what floweth from him but goodness? and what do we expect from him but such goodness as our hearts cannot sufficiently conceive of?

Secondly, Upon what grounds we may expect the Spirit to co-operate herewith.

1. Because God worketh congruously, as with respect to the subject upon which he worketh, so with respect to the object by which he worketh. The subject is the heart of man, and therefore he 'draweth us with the cords of a man,' Hosea xi. 4. The object is the gospel, a good word, or the good knowledge of God, and therefore a suitable means to work goodness in us. There we have good precepts and good promises, and an account of God's wonderful goodness and love in Christ; and 'therefore the fruit of his Spirit is in all goodness.' As the seal is graven, so the wax receiveth the stamp. The seal is the word, the wax is our heart, and the hand that applieth it is the Spirit of God; he is the principal cause, and maketh the gospel effectual to produce in us a frame of heart answerable to the scheme and structure of the word. In short, the good Spirit, by the good word, maketh us good, and so all suiteth.

2. The Spirit produceth this effect as a witness of the truth of the

gospel, which being a supernatural doctrine, needed to be attested from heaven, that the truth of it might be known by the mighty power of God which doth accompany it, working in our hearts effects suitable to the tenor of the word. Whatever doctrine can change the soul of man, and convert it to God, is of God, and owned by God. When such a holy doctrine sanctifieth us, we see the truth of it: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' When such deliverance is published, it maketh us free indeed: John viii. 32, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' When such a heavenly doctrine breedeth in us a heavenly mind: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'For we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' When such a spiritual doctrine bringeth in more of the Spirit: 2 Cor. iii. 8, 'How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?' Such a wise doctrine will fill us with wisdom; such a doctrine of grace and goodness breedeth all goodness in us, and so we have God's attestation to his truth.

3. That thereby God may signify his peculiar and elective love to his people. When he worketh all goodness in their hearts by his Spirit, they come to discern that he loveth them by a special love. Love or hatred cannot be known by anything that is before us, any outward dispensation whatsoever, Eccles. ix. 1; but when by the good Spirit of the Lord we are made like God and like Christ, and have the prints of the good word upon us, then we know his love to us: 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' And what spirit is that but a Spirit of love and goodness? for 'God is love,' ver. 16. Then we transcribe our pattern, and are brought into a conformity to God.

4. God maketh an offer of his grace to invite us to seriousness in attending on this gospel. He excludeth none in the offer, and therefore we must not exclude ourselves. None miss it but those that neglect and forfeit it through their carelessness, and disobedience, and ingratitude. If you would observe the seasons of his sanctifying motions, it would be much better with you: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.'

*Use 1. Is information.*

1. It informeth us how false the prejudices of the world are, who think the life of godliness a severe rigid thing, as if men did put off all good nature as soon as they enter upon the practice of it. No; 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness.' There cannot be a more delightful spectacle, unless it be to a man blinded with malice and prejudice and brutish lusts, than to see such a good man as is described in the word of God; for he is one that seeketh to do good to all, and hurt to none; looks for no great matters for himself in the world, bustles not for honour and greatness, but gives place, or at least due respect to all; he condescends to the meanest, envies none, revenges himself on none, but is courteous to all, beneficial to all according to his ability and opportunity. As to God, his business is to love him and live to him; he counteth it his happiness to live with him, and is careful to keep up a due remembrance of him by daily invocation and



worship; always rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and liveth in obedience to the motions of the sanctifying Spirit, so that his life is not tainted with the blot of any heinous sin. He is still encouraging himself with the promises of another world, levelling and directing all his actions thither. This is the true good man; and can spite and infidelity object anything against it? You will say, There are few such in the world. *Ans.* The more the pity, when so many helps and means to effect it. It is the fault of the men, not of the rule. But many such there are; yea, all the children of God are such in some measure. The world seeth it and hateth them, because their holy and heavenly life upbraideth their flesh-pleasing and carnal course.

2. It informeth us that the children of light should be full of goodness, or else they do not improve their advantages. We have a good word to direct us, after we had lost the knowledge of God, and of the world to come, and the way thither; that all this should be revealed to us by Christ clearly and plainly. And not only so, but we have a good Spirit to imprint this knowledge upon our hearts, and to give us a heavenly mind and life. Now what remaineth but that we should be good also? for what should a bad people do with a good religion? This good word, that assureth us of God's readiness to do mankind the greatest good; this good Spirit, whose great office it is to regenerate and make us good. But alas! many are more forward to talk of the word than live by it, and not so careful to walk in the Spirit as to boast of it.

3. That all the goodness that is in us is the fruit of the Spirit; he infuseth the graces, he exciteth the acts; therefore the glory of all that we have and do must be transferred to God. God hath a greater share in all the good that we do than we ourselves. We may say of our best actions, as Augustin of his illegitimate child, 'I had nothing in him but my sin;' nothing is ours but the defect, the good is God's. Again, on Ps. cxxxvii. he saith, *Opus tuum vide in me, Domine! non meum, &c.*—Regard, O Lord, in me, not my works, but thine own: if thou regardest my works, thou damnest me; if thine own, thou crownest me: since whatsoever good I have, I have it from thee, it is therefore rather thine than mine. Thus humbly and thankfully should we be affected. God is good of himself, good in himself, yea, goodness itself; there is no good above, or besides, or beyond him; it is all from him, if it be good, and therefore to him be all the glory.

*Use 2.* To exhort us to increase in all goodness. (1.) Moral goodness, which is holiness. Now holiness is the glory of God, and therefore must needs be our excellency: Exod. xv. 11, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' So that to be holy is to put on the royal robe of the king of all the earth. Surely the more a man partakes of the nature and image of God, the more excellent he is. (2.) Beneficial goodness, or kindness and mercy; this is the first and chiefest name of God. So God told Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee,' when he proclaimed his name: Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for

thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin ;' Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'The whole earth is full of thy goodness ;' Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' This doth first insinuate with us, and command our respect to him. The first temptation that ever was, was to weaken the conceit of his goodness. Now this is that which we are to imitate, to be good to all, and to do as much good as possibly we can.

## SERMON X.

*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.*—EPH. v. 9.

DOCT. 2. That one choice fruit of the Spirit wrought in the children of light is righteousness.

To explain this point, I will show you—(1.) What is righteousness ; (2.) That this is one of the fruits of the Spirit ; (3.) That it is a choice fruit because of the benefits which accrue to us thereby.

I. What is righteousness ? Sometimes it is taken as largely as holiness, for that grace which doth incline us to perform our duty to God and man ; for there is a righteousness even in godliness, or giving God his due honour and worship : Mat. xxii. 21, 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' More strictly it is taken for that grace which doth dispose and incline us to give every one his due, and is a branch of that love and charity which is the sum of the whole second table : Rom. xiii. 7, 8, 'Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' There is a debt of justice that we owe to ordinary men, and of subjection to those whom God hath set over us, which must be discharged. One debt you must still owe to all men, and that is charity, and it must be so paid as that it be always owing. Now here the word 'righteousness' must be taken in a convenient latitude, mixed of both senses,—an inclination to do that which we know to be holy and just. Now this righteousness in christians is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a mark of their union with Christ ; and therefore it must be advanced to a higher degree of perfection than that justice in heathens which is the fruit only of a natural conscience in us. It must look like a thing that cometh from a nature renewed and healed, or a divine supernatural principle, which doth not only alter the kind, but advance the degree of it. To evidence which—

1. Let us see what is the office of righteousness.
2. To what an height christianity advanceth it above all other institutions in the world.

First, What is the office and part of justice and righteousness ?



1. To seek the peace and welfare of the several communities and societies in which we live, or in preferring the public good before our own. We owe a debt of love to our country. God directeth his people to seek the good of Babylon while his providence continued them there: Jer. xxix. 7, 'And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace;' that is, in regard of their own interest in the common rest and quietness during their abode there; otherwise we are to pray for the downfall of Babylon. All passengers are concerned in the vessel wherein they are embarked. And if we are to seek the welfare of Babylon, much more are we to seek the welfare of Sion, where we live in christian society: Ps. cxxii. 6, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.' A christian community is represented as a body, and in a body the members should have a care one of another, and for the whole: 1 Cor. xii. 15, 'If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?' Well, then, this is the first part and office of justice, to perform the debt we owe to our country, for public interests must be preferred before private.

2. To give to every man his due; to use faithful dealing in all the duties we owe to others, or in all actions wherein we are employed and entrusted by others. We must be just in our trading and bargaining, according to the value of the things; in paying our debts, and preserving the rights of others, and giving due honour to the eminently holy. Because it is endless to instance in all, therefore there is a general rule: Mat. vii. 12, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' The equity of the rule is built upon two grounds—the actual equality of all men by nature, and the possible equality of all men by condition and state of life. The actual equality of all men by nature, for they were all made by the same God: Job xxxi. 15, 'Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?' So Mal. ii. 10, 'Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? Why do we then deal treacherously every man against his neighbour?' So Neh. v. 5, 'Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and our children as their children.' The possible equality of all men by condition and state of life: we may be brought into the same state. All are alike subject to corruption and calamity. To corruption, therefore be not severe on the failings of others: Gal. vi. 1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' To calamity: Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' You may be exposed to like calamities.

3. Fidelity in our relations is another part of justice; for all these relations imply a right which is due to others. So we must be just to superiors and inferiors. Magistrates must be just in governing: 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.' And it is said of David, 2 Sam. viii. 15, that 'he executed judgment and justice to all his people.' A good magistrate is *νόμος*

ἐμψυχος, a living law. And people must be just in obeying; inferiors in performing their duties to their superiors, children to their parents: Eph. vi. 1, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.' There is a right depending there. Masters to servants: Col. iv. 1, 'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.' Wives to their husbands: Col. iii. 18, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.' So proportionably to all other relations.

Secondly, To what a height christianity advanceth these things.

1. Because it deduceth things from a higher principle, the fixed principle of a nature renewed by Christ. There are in it three things—(1.) Another nature put into us, a fixed principle; (2.) And this by the Spirit's operation, and so it is a supernatural principle; (3.) This working after a kindly manner, by faith in Christ, and love to God in Christ, and so it is a forcible principle.

[1.] It is a fixed principle: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' When the heart is thus constituted and framed, that to be unjust, or to do anything unjust, is as unsuitable to them as it is for venomous berries to grow upon a choice vine. As it is said of such a one that he did good *quia aliter facere non poterat*, because he could not do otherwise, the same doth the new nature; it doth more than moral habits: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Now if the same grace that maketh us submissive to God maketh us also just and harmless to men, surely it is a great advantage when righteousness is another nature to us.

[2.] It is a supernatural principle. The mere motion of our own human spirit cannot enforce us, and incline us to righteousness so much as the Spirit of God: 'The gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law,' Rom. ii. 14. But here is a divine power, and so a more perfect principle. Take the human spirit as coming from God *ut author naturæ*, as the author of nature: Rom. i. 19, 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them;' or *ut author gratiæ*, as the author of grace, as God hath renewed them, and given them a new frame: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' But here is actual assistance: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 'I will put my Spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' The short is this, nature cannot do as much as grace, nor habitual grace infused so much as grace actually assisted by a divine and powerful assistance.

[3.] It is a forcible and kindly principle; for it is such a principle as worketh by the love of God, and hopes of glory; for 'Faith worketh by love,' Gal v. 6, as the apostle expresseth it. What will not such a principle do? faith representing what God hath done for us in Christ, and what he will further do. If we look back, what wonders of love doth faith represent to work us to an obedience to God's will! If we look forward, what hopes of glory and blessedness are set before us! Redemption by Christ and hopes of glory are more powerful and forcible principles than any reasons mere bare nature can suggest. No



wonder that they who never felt the force of faith and love to God upon their souls do so much cry up bare formality. Take faith as it representeth heaven to us, or our proper felicity in the vision and fruition of God, surely that doth establish righteousness upon sure terms, and advanceth it at a higher rate than all the arguments taken from our worldly interest and conveniences: Acts xxiv. 14-16, 'Believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.' Take the other principle, love to God. Indeed the immediate principle of justice is love to man, for all the second table is comprised in this, to 'love thy neighbour as thyself;' but love to man is but a stream from a higher fountain, which is love to God: 1 John iv. 21, 'And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.' Our love to our brother must be both excited and measured by our love to God. We must love all mankind, and all his creatures which bear his image; his natural image in all men, his spiritual image in his saints.

2. Because it measureth and directeth things by a more perfect rule than the law of nature. Our rule is God's word, which is a more pure and perfect rule than so much of the law as remaineth written upon man's heart after the fall. As natural conscience worketh more coldly than a principle of grace or faith working by love, so it is a more imperfect rule and direction to us, and we have a larger understanding of our duty by what God hath revealed in his word than otherwise we could have. We are told, Prov. xv. 21, 'That a man of understanding walketh uprightly.' To be thorough in our duty there needeth to be a large, deep, and solid judgment, sufficiently informed out of the word of God. But what instruction doth the word of God give in this point? To tell you that were to transcribe the whole bible, so far as it concerneth this duty of man to man. But in the general—

[1.] It requireth to be just in all things; to keep a good conscience in the smallest matter; not only in our public and most momentous actions, but justice is to be observed in lesser things as well as in greater; for where heaven and hell are concerned, nothing is little: Luke xvi. 10, 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.' Many will be righteous in some things, but in others dispense with themselves; but the good christian is careful to avoid all evil.

[2.] It requireth us to be just at all times, always exercising righteousness as God giveth opportunity and occasion: Ps. cvi. 3, 'Blessed are they which keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.' Not for a fit or pang, but ever; when it is cross to our interests as well as when it befriendeth them. A christian is to be just to friends and enemies. Many will be just to their friends, but there is nothing so disingenuous, bad, and cruel, but they think they may say it and do it to their enemies; but we must deprive none of their right.

[3.] To be not only just, but strictly just in our dealings: Deut. xvi. 20, 'That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou

mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' It is in the margin, and so in the Hebrew, Justice, justice shalt thou follow ; that is, exact justice : it should be done in such eminency, that it may appear that God's people are notoriously much better than other men are. If you be but as they, you harden the carnal world, and they think there is no great matter in religion : 1 Thes. v. 21, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil ;' at least when the honour of religion lieth at stake. I shall not be shy in giving you an eminent example of justice, which Austin thought fit twice to commemorate in his sermons. 'I shall tell you,' saith he, 'what was done by a very poor man at the time when I lived at Milan ; the man that I tell you of was so poor, that he was under an usher of a grammar-school, but a sincere and real christian. This very poor man, who had hardly wherewith to sustain his life, found a purse of two hundred crowns ; but being mindful of that justice which God requireth of his people, he set up in some public place a bill, giving notice of what he had found, that if any man had lost such a sum, he should come to such a place, to such a man, and receive it again. He that had lost the money heareth of the bill, cometh to the man, and giving sure tokens that it was his, he fully returned what he had found, without any defalcation or diminution. The other rejoicing that he had heard of his money again, and willing to make some requital, giveth him the tenth part, twenty of these crowns ; but he would not take it ; he offereth him ten, but he refuseth ; at length desireth him that at least he would accept of but five, still the man that found the purse refuseth it. The other seeing the honesty of the man, throweth him the purse, saying, I have lost nothing, if you will take nothing. O my brethren,' saith Austin, 'what a strife was here between an honest finder and a thankful rewarder ! The world was the theatre of this conflict, the spectator God. The finder at length being overcome by importunity, taketh what was offered, but presently gave it all to the poor, not reserving one crown for his own use. Consider, my brethren, such a glorious example, and consider what God's law can do upon the heart of the obedient : Justice, justice shalt thou follow.' Thus far he.

[4.] It requireth us to be just, whatever temptation we have to the contrary.

(1.) Of riches and worldly ends, which easily blind the mind, and will tempt us to authorise our usurpations of another's right with fair pretences. But, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.' Indulge it, and it will soon make a breach upon your duty ; but when the lust of wealth is mortified, temptations have the less power over you. A man that is governed and influenced by carnal interest can never have this habit and disposition of righteousness, to carry it so equitably and fairly in all his dealings ; for he that mindeth nothing but his own interest will soon believe that whatever is profitable is lawful ; might and force will be right to him. Therefore you are never safe till you have learned to prefer your duty before your interest.

(2.) Of friends, kindred, and relations. We are often tempted to be



unjust for their sakes, when it may be we are a little shy in our own case; for there conscience would boggle at it as too gross, but friendship puts an honest pretence upon it. I must love my friend, but *usque ad aras*; where religion forbids me, I must not keep friendship with men to break amity with God. He is our chief friend, and other obligations cease when his law interposeth by way of bar and restraint. Your friends may be dear to you, but truth and righteousness must be dearer: 2 Sam. xiii. 3, 'But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a subtiler man.' It was an abuse of friendship when Jonadab would countenance Amnon in his sin, and so his friend proved his greatest foe by his pernicious counsel; though he was a friend to his person or sin, yet a foe to his soul. True friendship is grounded in God and virtue; to do for our friend, where his law is in no danger to be broken, is true friendship: Prov. xxvii. 6, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' To reprove them, and cross them in their sins, is to promote their salvation. So it holdeth good as to our party. It is gross partiality to aggravate the faults of others, and spare them because they are of our combination and society; because then for interest you lose conscience, when we think all is right and well done by those whom we best like, and all wrong that is never so well done by adversaries. Or else we shall soon fall into gross unrighteousness; as Barnabas was led away by Peter's dissimulation. No; when Peter walked not uprightly, Paul withstood him to the face, Gal. ii. 12, 13. Otherwise we have a stone and a stone, a weight and a weight.

(3.) We must not be drawn to do an unrighteous deed by fear or flattery. Sometimes fear is an evil counsellor, and we run into a snare if we be not fortified against it: Prov. xxix. 25, 'The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.' Fear must be checked by a sure trust. God can bring us off from an inconvenience better than any injustice of ours. So by flattery many are enticed into evil, which otherwise they could not bring their hearts to commit: Prov. xxvi. 28, 'A flattering mouth worketh ruin;' Prov. xxix. 5, 'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet;' that by worldly allurements or fair pretences and crafty insinuations draweth others into sin.

(4.) Do nothing unjust even for religion's sake. When men are secure of their end, they care not what means they use. Alas! we should not step out of God's way for the greatest good in the world. A good end will not warrant an ill action. God needeth not our iniquity to uphold his interest. Christ hath other ways to get up than upon the devil's shoulders. Nothing dishonoureth God more than when men deceive, lie, break oaths, rebel against lawful authority, or use any sinful means to secure and promote religion. It is flat unbelief, and making more haste than good speed, to ease ourselves of our burdens and discontents by any sinful shifts: Job xiii. 7, 'Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?' God needeth not my lie for his glory: Rom. iii. 7, 'For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged a sinner?' He will have no honour tendered to him but by

lawful and approved means. It argueth our impatiency and ill thoughts of God when we seek, like Jacob, to get the blessing by a wile.

(5.) Not by opportunity. Be not tempted to be unrighteous or unjust when put into places of power and trust; such have an opportunity of being unrighteous. Many are innocent because they have no opportunity to be otherwise. It is said, John xii. 6, that 'Judas was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.' If we will find the sin, God may righteously find the occasion. And when corrupt affections and suitable temptations and objects meet, it is dangerous to the soul. Well, then, the scripture showeth that we must not depart from our rule and resolution of righteous and just dealing upon any temptation whatsoever. Many resolve to be just, but when the temptation cometh, their resolution is shaken. Oh, remember, the greatest gain will prove a loss and a hard bargain in the issue: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' He that seeketh to pleasure others, or help himself by unjust means, doth but consult shame to himself and his friends.

3. Because it referreth them to a more noble end, which is the glory of God: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;' Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' Now he that propoundeth to himself such an end is more exact and thorough in the use of means than another can be that only mindeth his own interest; for the baser the end is, the more base are a man's actions; but the nobler end he hath, he liveth at a higher rate than others do. That which is done for God must be done in a godlike manner, or as will become the excellencies of God.

II. That this is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It must needs be so, because it suiteth with his office and personal operations. The Spirit is to be our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. As our guide, he doth direct and enlighten our minds; as our sanctifier, he doth change our hearts; and as our comforter, he doth pacify, and clear, and quiet our consciences. Now this fruit of righteousness is conducive to all these ends, or agreeable with these offices.

1. As our guide, he doth enlighten our minds with saving knowledge; and no knowledge is saving but what endeth in righteousness; as here: 'You are light in the Lord: walk as children of the light; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness;' Jer. xxii. 16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' We have no true knowledge of God, either of his nature or of the will of God, till this knowledge influence the duties of our callings and relations; for God is no further savingly known than he is obeyed, and that in all things which belong to our duty.

2. As our sanctifier, he doth change our hearts; and the true fruits of repentance and change of heart are the works of righteousness: Isa. i. 16, 17, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' This is particularly insisted on as the proper fruit of their change. So Dan. iv. 27, 'Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' Repentance is a



breaking off our former course of sin. And to a king that was an open persecutor Daniel preacheth righteousness and mercy. They that continue in their former unjust courses never yet repented. So Zech. viii. 16, 17, 'These are the things which ye shall do, Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.' God would have their repentance thus expressed. Thus in the general; but more particularly, the fruit and work of the Spirit tendeth to this end, to make us like God, and amiable to God, to fit us for communion with God, and to glorify God in the eyes of the world; and much of this is done by righteousness; certainly nothing is done without it.

[1.] By it we are made like God, and do resemble his divine perfections: Ps. cxlv. 17, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' There is a perfect holiness in his nature, and a decency in all his actions; and when our natures are sanctified, and all our actions are righteous and holy, we are framed after this pattern: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

[2.] The work of the Spirit is to make us acceptable and pleasing unto God. Now the just and righteous man is an object of his complacency: Prov. xv. 9, 'The way of the wicked is abomination unto the Lord; but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.' The Lord loveth all his creatures with a general love, but with a special love he loveth those that bear his image. He doth not love any because they are rich and mighty, fair and beautiful, valiant and strong, but as holy and righteous. So it is said, Prov. xxi. 3, 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.' God hath required both, and men should make conscience of both; yet the one is to be preferred before the other, though the one be a duty of the first table, the other of the second; because moral and substantial duties are better than ceremonial. Internal duties are to be preferred before external, and duties evident by natural light before things of positive institution; as appeareth by this, that God doth accept of moral duties without ceremonial observances: 'In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him,' Acts x. 35. But God never accepteth of ceremonial observances without moral duties; he still rejecteth their offerings when they neglected justice: Micah vi. 7, 8, 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Again, he dispenseth with ceremonials and externals of religion when they come in competition with moral duties, even of the second table; as David's eating the show-bread when an hungered, Mat. xii. 3, 4. But he never dispenseth with moral duties. Well, then, how right and punctual soever we be in other things, unless we show mercy, and do justice, we are not accepted with God, though we are zealous for or against ceremonies, or are of the strictest party in religion. Indeed, we cannot say they are better than faith, and love, and

the fear of God, and hope in his grace ; for these are the substantial duties of the first table. And compare substantials with substantials, first-table duties are more weighty ; but compare internals of the second with externals of the first, moral duties of the second with the ceremonies of the first, duties natural and evident with the merely positive and instituted, these are more weighty. To conclude, let me add that of the psalmist : Ps. xi. 7, 'The righteous Lord loveth righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright.'

[3.] Righteousness fitteth for communion with God. True it is the righteous have an easy access to God, and are sure of audience : Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.' Saul will not see my face, but this comforteth me, that I can behold thy face. Lord, thou wilt look upon me, be gracious to me, and hear my prayer, because I desire to come before thee in righteousness. God will not hear the prayers of the unjust, nor accept their offerings, 'till judgment run down as a river, and righteousness as a mighty stream,' Amos v. 23, 24 ; and rejecteth the Jewish fast, Isa. lviii., because they did not loose the bands of wickedness, and undo the heavy burden, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke.

[4.] The work of the Spirit is to enable us to glorify God in the eyes of the world, which is very much done by righteousness ; for this is very lovely and venerable in the eyes of the worst sort of men. A christian, if he had no other engagement upon him, yet, for the honour of God and the credit of religion, he should do those things which are lovely and comely in themselves, and so esteemed by the world. Natural conscience reverenceth righteousness : Mark vi. 20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and observed him.' When you give every one their due, you bring more honour to God and credit to religion ; you can better hold up the credit of it against contradiction. Justice is so lovely a thing, partly as it is a stricture of the image of God ; it is said, Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour ;' for all excellency and perfection is determined by conformity to God. And partly because the welfare of human society is promoted by it ; for 'these things are good and profitable to men,' Titus iii. 8. They are such good things as the world is most capable to know and own. There are some things which none but christians themselves approve, as the positive rites of religion, or the peculiar mysteries thereof. These the carnal world are no capable judges of. Acts xviii. 13-15, 'This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to law. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you ; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters.' But there are other things which the world approveth ; there are certain common principles wherein we agree. Nature approveth goodness, justice, and truth, as corrupt as it is, though not faith and sacraments. The unbelieving world reverenceth these things as good, and of a divine original.

3. The third office of the Spirit is to be a comforter. Now righteousness affordeth peace of conscience, and quietness and holy security : 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our con-



versation in the world ;' Ps. xcvii. 11, 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart ;' Prov. xxix. 6, 'The righteous doth sing and rejoice ;' that is, whatever befalleth him, good or evil, much or little, in life or death. And he hath comfort in his portion, because what he hath he hath by the fair leave and allowance of God's providence ; if it be little, that little is better than more gotten by fraud and injustice : Prov. xvi. 8, 'Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right ;' Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.' Suppose their condition be evil, yet still they have ground of comfort ; if scorned or neglected, yet he hath the comfort of his innocent dealing to bear him out ; as Samuel when he and his house were laid aside : 1 Sam. xii. 3, 'Behold, here I am ; witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed ; whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received bribes to blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it you.' If opposed or maligned, as Moses : Num. xvi. 15, 'And Moses was very wrath, and said unto the Lord, Respect not thou their offering ; I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.' If oppressed : Ps. cxix. 121, 'I have done judgment and justice ; leave me not to my oppressors.' Suppose death cometh : 'The righteous hath hope in his death,' Prov. xiv. 32 ; Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'And he said, Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee, in truth, and with a perfect heart.' When he is going the way of all the earth, this will be a comfort to him, that he hath done no wrong, that he hath served God faithfully, and lived with men without guile and deceit. Oh, for the comforts of a dying hour ! The crooked, the subtle, the deceitful have them not, but those that walk with a simple plain-hearted honesty.

III. It is a choice fruit of the Spirit.

1. Because it conduceth so much to the good of human society. A christian is a member of a double community, of the church and of the world ; the one in order to eternal life, the other in order to the present life : in the latter he is considered as a man, in the former as a christian. Now the righteous are pillars of human societies, that keep up a spirit of truth and justice in the world, without which it would be but as a den of thieves, or filled with liars, deceivers, robbers, enemies. *Remota justitia*, saith Austin, *quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia ?* The world cannot subsist without justice. 'The king's throne is established by righteousness,' Prov. xvi. 12. The honour and reputation of any nation is kept up : Prov. xiv. 34, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation.' Never did the people of the Jews, nor any other nation whose history is come to our ears, flourish so much as when they were careful and exact in maintaining righteousness. And as to persons, all commerce between man and man is kept up by it. Surely it is God, and not the devil, that governeth the world, and distributeth the rewards and blessings of this life ; therefore the way to do well in the world is not lying, cozening, and dissembling, but a strict obedience to God's holy will.

2. Because of the many promises of God, both as to the world to come and the present life. As to the world to come, the question is put, Ps. xv. 1 (and it were well if we would put it oftener), 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? who shall dwell in thy holy hill ?' And

it is answered, ver. 2, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.' Others are excluded: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' So for this world there are many promises. Take a taste: Prov. x. 2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit not; but righteousness delivereth from death.' How soon can God blow upon and blast an ill-gotten estate! Job xx. 12-15, 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly;' and ver. 26, 'A fire not blown shall consume him;' Job v. 3, 'I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation.'

*Use 1.* (1.) To show what a friend religion is to human societies, that placeth so much in righteousness. It preventeth all that is false, bad, unjust or cruel, and teacheth us to be tender, not only over other men's persons and estates, but names. Grace doth not abolish so much of nature as is good, but refine and sublimates it, by causing us to act from higher principles to higher ends, and maketh these duties doubly dear to us, in the flesh and in the Lord.

(2.) It sheweth where the safety of christians lieth, in their righteousness. God is their protector: 1 Peter iii. 13, 'Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' And there is a strong conviction in the consciences of wicked men: 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' Moral duties are not small things, when the glory of God, the safety of his people, and comfort of our sincerity lieth in them.

*Use 2.* To press you to get this fruit of the Spirit.

1. Propound to do nothing but what is agreeable to righteousness and honesty: Prov. xii. 5, 'The thoughts of the righteous are right, but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.'

2. Be always exercising righteousness: Ps. cvi. 3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.'

3. Teach it to your children: Gen. xviii. 19, 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice.'

[See more of this in Sermon on Ps. cxix. 121.]

## SERMON XI.

*Goodness, righteousness, and truth.*—EPH. v. 9.

DOCT. 3. That to make a christian complete in his carriage towards men, to goodness and righteousness there must be added truth.

Let me inquire here—(1.) What is truth; (2.) That it must be made conscience of by the children of light; (3.) Why truth must be added to goodness and righteousness.



I. What is meant by truth? *Ans.* Sincerity or uprightness in all our speeches and dealings with men. But because integrity of life, and uprightness in our commerce and dealings with others, is a great branch of righteousness, therefore here we must consider it as an opposite to falsehood or a lie in speech; yet not excluding either godly sincerity, which is the root of it: 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,' Ps. li. 6; or internal integrity and righteousness: Jer. v. 1, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth;' where truth is put for integrity of life. But here we take it chiefly for simplicity of speech, without lying and dissimulation; as also it is taken, Ps. xv. 2, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart;' that is, maketh conscience of what he speaketh, ruling his tongue so as it may go with his heart. To understand this sort of truth, we must consider what a lie is. Men are said to lie when they do wittingly or willingly, and with a purpose to deceive by speech, signify to others that which is false. The matter of a lie is falsehood, the formality of it is an intention to deceive; the outward sign is speech. Gestures are a sign by which we discover our mind, but an imperfect sign; the special instrument of human commerce is speech. Now there is a twofold lying—a lying to God, and a lying to men.

1. A lying to God is the worst sort of lying, because it argueth not only falsity and evil hypocrisy, but misbelief or ill thoughts of God, as if he did not know the heart and try the reins, and is contented to be mocked with a false appearance. We lie to God when we put him off with a false appearance and show of what is not in the heart, as if he could be deceived with outsides and vain pretences: Hosea xi. 12, 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit;' meaning their false and deceitful pretences of repentance, because they relented a little, and did some outward acts that might be a sign and show of repentance, especially in a time of trouble: Ps. lxxviii. 36, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Their hearts were not sincerely set against sin, whatever pangs of devotion they had for the present: Ezek. xxiv. 12, 'She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her.' When the pot was over the fire, the scum came a-top, and seemed ready to be cast out, but it was swallowed up again; for all their pretences of repentance, they were not cleansed from their open and notorious sins. To this purpose also is another similitude: Hosea vii. 16, 'They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow.' They did not sincerely intend what they promised; as a man that shooteth, but doth not level right, or take care to direct the arrow to the mark. So they cast out promises to get rid of trouble, but do not seriously set their hearts to accomplish them; their repentance was but as a show, they aimed at nothing in it but to deceive God.

2. As to men; and so there are several sorts of lies. We may distinguish them thus—either from the matter, or the end, or the formality used in lying.

(1.) From the matter, and so a lie is twofold—assertory or promissory.

[1.] An assertory lie is when a man, in a matter that is past or present, reporteth that as false which he knoweth to be true, and that as true which he knoweth to be false. This is called in scripture speaking with a double heart: Ps. xii. 2, 'They speak vanity every one with his neighbour, with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak;' or with a heart and a heart, as if he had one heart to conceive of the matter as it is, and another heart to furnish the tongue. Instances of this falsehood in our assertions, or untrue relating of things done, are frequent; as Ananias, who brought part of the money for which he sold his possession, instead of the whole: Acts v. 3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?' It was a lie, and a lie to the Holy Ghost, as being pretended to be done by his motion and inspiration, or because of his presidency in church affairs, where the Holy Ghost doth all.

[2.] A promissory lie is when we promise for the time to come what we never intend to perform; and this is the worse, because it doth not only pervert the end of speech, which is truth, but we also defeat another of that right which we seemed to give him in the thing promised, which is a further degree of injustice, as being not only against veracity, but righteousness. Vain and empty promises are a great evil, when we make show of kindness to others without any intent to do them good: Prov. xix. 22, 'The desire of a man is his kindness; and a poor man is better than a liar.' The meaning is, that which is desired of a man is his favour in such or such a business, wherein he hath power to help you. Now many great men, that covet the praise and reputation of doing a good office or kind turn, are very forward in promises, but fail in performance; and therefore Solomon, who had observed the course of the world, telleth you that a poor man that loveth you, and will do his best, is a surer friend than such great men as only give you good words, or sprinkle you with a little court holy-water, but will do nothing for you.

[2.] From the end; and so there are three sorts of lies—*mendacium jocosum*, the sporting lie, tending to our recreation and delight; *mendacium officiosum*, the officious lie, tending to others' profit; and *mendacium perniciosum*, the pernicious and hurtful lie, tending to our neighbour's prejudice.

(1.) The sporting lie, when an untruth is devised for merriment. I do not remember any instance of this in scripture, unless it may be intended in that place, Hosea vii. 4, 'They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.' They stick not at any sin, so they may make the princes merry. But this I am sure of, that it is a sin to speak an untruth, and we must not make a jest of sin: Prov. xxvi. 19, 'So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?' No; if a christian will be merry, he hath other diversions: James v. 13, 'If any be merry, let him sing psalms;' Eph. v. 4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.' Let him not speak things against the sense of his own mind, especially by false representations traduce the godly, and make religion ridiculous, and say, I am in sport. Idle words are to be accounted for: Mat. xii. 36, 'I say unto



you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment.' Let him use harmless recreations, without accusing his brother falsely, or shamming him with devised lies. Now to this sporting lie a fable or parable is not to be reduced, because it is an artificial way of representing truth; as when Jotham bringeth in the trees conferring and consulting about their king, Judges ix. 8. Nor yet such sharp and piercing ironies as we find used by holy men in the scripture; as when Elijah saith, 1 Kings xviii. 27, 'He is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked;' for this is a notable way to make truth strike upon the heart with the more force.

(2.) The officious lie, for the help and relief of ourselves or others. Instances we have of this in the scripture. Thus Rebecca teacheth Jacob to lie, that he might gain the blessing, Gen. xxvii.; and the Egyptian midwives saved the male children of the Israelites by feigning they were delivered before they came to them, Exod. i. 17, 18; unless it may be extenuated, that so it was sometimes, and they might send to them to use the help of other women. Though it be so, they feared God, and were rewarded by God. *Non remunerata est fallacia, sed benevolentia*—Not their lie, but their mercy was rewarded: their mercy was commended, but their infirmity pardoned. So Rahab saved the spies by telling the men of her city that they were gone, when she had hidden them under the stalks of flax, Josh. ii. 5-7. Thus Michal, to save David, feigned that he was sick, 1 Sam. xiv. 14; and David advised Jonathan to an officious lie for his safety, 1 Sam. xx. 6; and Hushai by temporising with Absalom, preserved David, 2 Sam. xvi. 17-19; and to divide his counsels, pretendeth hearty affection to him. But we are to live by rule, not by examples; and a good cause must be followed by lawful means; and courage and constancy will do more in these cases than dissimulation, and tend more to the glory of God, and the preservation of ourselves and others.

(3.) There is a pernicious lie, to the hurt and prejudice of others. Of this nature was that first lie by which all mankind was ruined: Gen. iii. 4, 5, 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' And Jacob's children's lie concerning Joseph: Gen. xxxvii. 31, 32, 'This we have found; know now whether it be thy son's coat, yea or no.' And that of the Jewish elders concerning Christ, who said that his disciples stole him away by night, Mat. xxviii. 12-14. All lying is forbidden, but more especially this sort. I say, all these sorts are lies, for the scripture condemneth all without distinction: Eph. iv. 25, 'Wherefore put away all lying.' And all liars are shut out of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 8. And again, Rev. xxii. 15, 'Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie' is cast into hell. They all violate the natural order which God hath appointed between the heart and the tongue, and the law which he hath given to preserve faith in the world. The sporting lie is unnecessary, for we have other honest recreations wherewith to divert our minds. And though officious lies are not to the hurt but good of others, yet they are to the hurt and prejudice of the truth. A man is not to lie for God, and therefore not for another

man; he hindereth a greater good, which is the truth of commerce between mankind, and he hurteth his own soul. Sin depriveth us of a greater good. And Augustin telleth us of one Firmus who was *firmus nomine* and *firmior voluntate*, who being interrogated by the persecutors about such a person or persons as he knew concealed, *respondit mentiri nec posse nec hominem prodere*, and suffered many torments, till he obtained a pardon both for himself and them. But of all lies, the pernicious lie is most pernicious. To deceive others with an untruth, or to lie to their wrong, is both horrible falsehood and injustice.

[3] A lie from the formality used in making it may be distinguished thus—

(1.) A lie committed in ordinary commerce, when we speak of things or persons otherwise than we know to be true. This is a lie; for our words ought always to be agreeable to our minds. Thus Job speaketh of his friends: Job xiii. 4, 'But ye are forgers of lies.' Because they accused him unjustly, though it were not in a juridical process. And Christ of the Jews: John viii. 55, 'And if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you;' and Ps. cix. 2, 'For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.' Thus impudent backbiters will in secret vent their calumnies and slanders, and avouch the most false things as truth; and so a good man is secretly hurt and wounded many times, and his reputation and service prejudiced when he knoweth it not.

(2.) A lie committed in courts of judicature; as Exod. xxiii. 1, 'Thou shalt not raise a false report; put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.' So ver. 7, 'Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked.' Now this is the most heinous sort of lying, because it perverteth God's ordinance, appointed for the finding out of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and turns a tribunal of justice into a record of iniquity: Ps. xciv. 10, 'He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?' Partly because witnesses are sworn; and perjury, a lie confirmed by an oath, is no small crime: 'God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,' Exod. xx. 7. Partly because they are bound to witness the truth, and the whole truth, concerning the fact in hand, which in ordinary commerce we are not bound to do. Indeed in ordinary speech our purpose should be to inform our neighbour, not to deceive him; but we are not bound to inform him in all things, or to make known all that is true in every matter of fact, but when we are called thereto by justice and charity. I must speak falsehood at no time, but I am not bound at every time to speak the whole truth; but in matters of testimony, I must speak all that belongeth to that fact in question, without fraud or collusion. Therefore this is the most criminal sort of lying. Partly because my neighbour is greatly wronged by it; he is wronged by privy detraction, but more evidently wronged by a false testimony in judgment; not only wronged in his reputation, but in his life or estate; not only before a few, but in the face of his country, before all who shall have notice of it; and wronged in a



solemn way, not by whispers, but by a sentence given by God's deputies and officers in the throne of judgment or seat of justice.

II. Why must it be made conscience of by the children of light, or those who are 'light in the Lord'?

I answer—For these reasons—

1. Because it is a sin most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself; it is not only contrary to his will but to his nature: Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' He can do all things, but he cannot lie. What a case had the world been in if God could lie, or were not of undoubted truth! for then we could be sure of nothing; no sure direction by his word, nor comfort by his promises. Therefore lying is a sin that maketh us unlike God. God cannot lie, nor command us to lie. He can command us to take the life of another, for he commanded Abraham to offer Isaac; the life of all creatures are at his dispose. He can command us to take the goods of another, as when the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians of their jewels; for he is the sovereign Lord of all, and can transfer right and property as he pleaseth from man to man: but God cannot lie, nor give command for any to lie, because it is contrary to his nature. And there is an impossibility in the case: Heb. vi. 18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie;' as it is impossible for God to cease to be God, or to act contrary to his nature. Therefore there cannot be a greater deformity or unlikeness to God than to be given to lying.

2. Because when God was incarnate, and came not only to represent the goodness of the divine nature, but also the holiness of it as a pattern for our imitation, Jesus Christ, this God incarnate, was eminent for this part of holiness, for sincerity and truth: 1 Peter ii. 22, 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' This was Christ's character, and therefore it should be ours; for this is true religion, to imitate what we worship. You know Christ's commendation of Nathanael: John i. 47, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.' Why an Israelite indeed? Because he was like old Israel; for it is said of Jacob, who is also called Israel, that he was 'a plain man, and dwelt in tents,' Gen. xxv. 27. We may say of a plain-hearted christian, how weak soever he be otherwise, Behold a christian indeed, because he is like Christ. Therefore it is prophesied that in the days of the gospel: Zeph. iii. 13, 'The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.' They shall be all like Christ. This prophecy intimateth both duty and event; it showeth not only what christians should be, but shall be, if they be true christians. Well, then, this is the essential commendation of a true christian. Some of God's saints may be famous for several graces, but all for truth; Moses for meekness, Phineas for zeal, Abraham for faith, David for devotion; but every one that is born of God, and accepted of God upon the account of Christ, for sincerity and truth. It is made the qualification of the pardoned to have no guile: Ps. xxxii. 2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'

3. Nothing maketh us more like the devil, who is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer

from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him : when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it.' All sins call him father, but chiefly a lie ; for he brought sin into the world by the way of lying at the first. And therefore to be given to lying argueth too much prevalency of the satanical nature. The disposition to lie is the image of the devil, the act is the work of the devil : Acts v. 3, ' Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ? ' and should the children of light be like the father of lies ?

4. It is a sin most contrary to the new nature wrought in the saints, and seemeth to offer more violence to it than other sins. The new nature may be considered doubly, either as to mortification or vivification ; the sins we put off, or the graces it produceth : both from the one and the other consideration the scripture reasoneth against lying. From the ' corrupt nature ' which is put off : Col. iii. 9, ' Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; ' that is, never suggest or say any false thing to the injury of another, since this is a principal part of that corrupt nature which we have put off, and course of life which ye have all renounced. Naturally we are all full of guile and falsehood ; now as a battered vessel must be new cast before it be brought into any frame, so till the heart be renewed we are crooked, perverse, deceitful. Now what the new nature renounceth and destroyeth must not be cherished again. Sometimes from the ' new nature ' which is put on ; as Eph. iv. 24, 25, ' And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness : wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour ; for we are members one of another.' Therefore this is a very odious and unseemly sin in a christian, and inconsistent with the grace which he hath received, or contrary to that sincerity and true holiness which is the fruit of regeneration. Therefore God presumeth that his people will hate and abhor this sin : Isa. lxiii. 8, ' For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' He expecteth that his children will not deal falsely, nor circumvent and deceive others, since he hath framed them for this very thing, cured and set straight the crooked spirit in them, and disposed and fitted them to deal sincerely, or to do all things as in his sight, according to his will, and for his glory.

5. It is a sin most contrary to human society. Man is by nature *ζῶον πολιτικόν*, a creature fitted for society. Now all society is founded in truth ; take away truth and you destroy all human converse, and there could be no living, nor trading, nor dwelling together ; for if there be no truth, we are unfit to be trusted, and so it overthroweth all the commerce of the world. If it were lawful to vend counterfeit money without any restraint, how suspicious would men be, and cast away true gold and silver as suspecting all ? Now money, which is the material instrument of commerce, is not so necessary as truth and fidelity, which is the root and foundation of it. Therefore God, as for other reasons, so for the good of mankind, hath condemned all lying, that mutual commerce may not be destroyed. Much more doth this hold good where the community is not only human, but christian, and so we all belong to the same mystical body ; so the apostle



urgeth it : Eph. iv. 25, 'Speak every one truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' Members should seek one another's welfare as much as they do their own ; and it is monstrous for one member to deceive and defraud another ; therefore the Lord commandeth truth, and the Holy Spirit worketh this truth in us, that we may be heartily and really serviceable and faithful one to another, as members of the same body.

6. Lying is a sin very hateful to God, and against which he hath expressed much of his displeasure. Partly by express declaration of his mind. A lying tongue is reckoned among those six things which God hateth : Prov. vi. 17, 'A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.' Nay, that it may not be forgotten or lost in the crowd, it is again mentioned in ver. 19, 'A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren ;' so again, Prov. xii. 21, 22, 'There shall no evil happen to the just ; but the wicked shall be filled with mischief : lying lips are an abomination to the Lord ; but they that deal truly are his delight.' Now certainly we should hate what God hateth, and love what God loveth ; for to nill and will the same things is true amity and agreement. Partly by his threatenings of destruction, both in this life and in the life to come : Ps. v. 6, 'Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing ;' Prov. xix. 5, 'He that speaketh lies shall not escape ;' first or last God will cut them off as unfit for human converse. The first remarkable instance of God's vengeance in the new testament was for a lie : Acts v. 5, 'And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost ; and great fear came on all them that heard these things.' And in the life to come : Rev. xxi. 8, 'All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' Now, when God is so express in denouncing his judgments against such kind of sinners, all that have a tender heart will tremble.

7. It is a sin shameful and odious in the eyes of men. The more common honesty any man hath, the further he is from it, especially the more he hath of the spirit of grace : Prov. xiii. 5, 'A righteous man hateth lying ; but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.' All men hate a liar, because they suspect him ; this is that they gain by lying, that they are the less credited, and not believed, even when they speak truth. Therefore it concerneth God's children to keep up the full value of their testimony, and to carry it so that all their words may be received with respect and reverence. Christ used such plainness in his converse as a man, that his word was enough : John xiv. 2, 'If it were not so, I would have told you.' The Persians had such a respect for truth, that he that was three times convicted of a lie was never more to treat or speak in public affairs. Indeed men most guilty of it cannot endure to be charged with it. Zedekiah smote Micaiah on the cheek when he told him of his lying spirit, 1 Kings xxii. 23, 24. Those that do not abstain from it as sinful count a lie shameful. Though they have no conscience to make a lie before God, yet they count it a disgrace to take the lie from men, because thereby they are judged unfit for human society, or useless, if not dangerous to others.

III. Why this must be added to goodness and righteousness.

1. Because they cannot be preserved without it. Not goodness, for

it will only be a counterfeit show, that endeth in empty words, and promises or pretences of kindness when there is hatred in the heart : ' Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth,' 1 John iii. 18 ; and again, Rom. xii. 9, ' Let love be without dissimulation ; abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.' Many pretend in their professions, speeches, and promises, a great deal of goodness, but in their hearts intend it not, but seek to get loose upon all occasions. Men live by interest more than by conscience ; so righteousness cannot be preserved except there be truth ; they are seeking some fair pretence for an unjust and wrongful course. When once the heart is hardened in lying, it is fit for all manner of injustice ; for a liar will stick at nothing, and most of our injurious practices are covered by a lie : Prov. xii. 17, ' He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness ; but a false witness, deceit.' They that make no conscience of lying will stick at no manner of unrighteousness ; but when their interest leadeth them, will swallow perjury as well as lying, or purloin and overreach others when they have an opportunity. There is no hold of them ; for when there is such a gap opened in the conscience, what sin will be kept out ? If the laws restrain them from violence, they will do injury to others by deceit, which is so natural to them. And so the security of the world is not sufficiently provided for till truth be joined to the other graces.

2. The life of goodness and righteousness lieth in truth, and so they cannot be thoroughly exercised unless truth be added. Sincerity runs through all the graces. As to the upper part of religion, truth enliveneth all our worship. Where God is sincerely loved and worshipped, he is more thoroughly served and obeyed : Isa. xxxviii. 3, ' Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight ;' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ' And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.' Sincerity doth its best. So in the lower hemisphere of duty, truth maketh us more exactly righteous and industriously good. It maketh us more exactly righteous. There are many cases arise about what is just and equal, and surely it is very profitable to have a deep, solid, and large understanding, and where we are at a loss ourselves, to consult with others ; but the best resolver of hard questions, next to the Holy Ghost, is in our own bosoms. Sincerity will sooner interpret our duty ; it is fleshly wisdom which breedeth all or most of our perplexities. A sincerely righteous man hath that within him that inclines him to righteous things : Prov. xii. 5, ' The thoughts of the righteous are right ;' Ps. xxxvii. 31, ' The law of God is in his heart ; none of his steps shall slide.' So it maketh us industriously good. A man truly good is much directed by the inclination of his own heart : Isa. xxxii. 8, ' But the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.' They are always seeking out occasions of doing good : Heb. vi. 10, ' Ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' And he speaketh there of a labour of love. There needeth not much ado with the sincere, for their hearts are inclined to these things.

*Use 1.* To reprove many, because they make so little conscience of



truth. Lying is a more general and common sin than we imagine. Those expressions intimate it: Rom. iii. 4, 'Let God be true, but every man a liar.' The phrase intimateth, that though there be none in God, yet there is much falseness and unfaithfulness in men; and it is said, Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.' Falsehood and lies are kindly sins to a natural heart, they break out early; before they go, they went astray; the seed of these sins is in them, as if they began to lie as soon as they came out of their mother's womb. And as it is an early sin, so it is universal: Ps. xii. 1, 2, 'The faithful fail from among the children of men, they speak vanity every one with his neighbour, with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.' This is the general disposition of mankind. The most sacred bonds will not bind or hold them to any truth and righteousness; and a man knoweth scarce who to believe, the simplicity of commerce being almost lost in the world.

*Use 2.* It sheweth how much they give suspicion that they are not children of light who have not this truth wrought in them. Some good men may lie, as the scriptures show, but they are not given to lying. The very act is a foul sin; but every lie doth not argue a graceless estate. It is a sin more contrary to sincerity than other sins, yet some few acts are not altogether destructive of it. David prayeth, 'Remove from me the way of lying,' Ps. cxix. 29; that sheweth he was too prone to it, he had been too faulty in that kind. How many acts show the habit is very hard to determine; and in so weighty a case as the assurance of salvation, we should not leave the matter suspicious and questionable. He that will sin as often as may stand with saving grace shall never have assurance of his sincerity till he break this course and way of lying by repentance; and for the present there is a bar against his actual entrance into heaven, or a present unfitness, till his reconciliation be made with God.

*Use 3.* See that ye be found in this grace also, as well as in goodness and righteousness. God is truth, and requireth truth, and delighteth in truth: Ps. li. 6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' It is your strength, as a girdle to your loins: Eph. vi. 14, 'Having your loins girt about with truth.' It is your comfort, downright honesty breedeth rejoicing: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Therefore we should make great conscience of truth, putting away all lying.

The means are these—

1. Get your hearts healed and renewed by the Spirit. Till we have a right spirit, we may speak truth out of interest, or for other reasons; but we are always in danger of being crooked and deceitful, for the old heart is inclined to lying and deceit. It is called the 'old man, which is corrupt according to his deceitful lusts,' Eph. iv. 22. There are swarms of lusts will put us upon it, malice, envy, pride, vainglory, worldly affections.

2. Let us hate it as a horrid sin; do not think it a venial matter: Ps. cxix. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.' A slight hatred is not sufficient to guard us against it.

3. Remember your spiritual conflict. You never give your enemy so great an advantage as by falsehood and guile of spirit. Satan's weapons against you are wiles and darts: 'wiles,' Eph. vi. 11, and 'fiery darts,' ver. 16. Against his darts or blasphemous thoughts you oppose faith, and against his wiles your strength lieth in downright honesty. Righteousness is your breastplate, and truth your girdle, ver. 14. This will guard you against his temptations, and give you strength and courage in the day of sore trial; it is strength against him both as a tempter and an accuser.

4. Heedfulness, or a constant watch over your tongue: Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me;' Ps. cxli. 3, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.' And this watch is quickened by the fear of God, in whose sight and hearing we always are.

5. Avoid the causes of lying. I shall mention some of them—

[1.] Pride and self-esteem. We all affect to seem better than we are, and what we want in real worth we make up by lying and foolish boasting. The 'lying tongue,' and 'the tongue that speaketh proud things,' are joined together, Ps. xii. 3.

[2.] Flattery, or a desire to ingratiate ourselves with great ones: Ps. xii. 2, 'With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.' A self-seeker is apt to flatter and fawn upon all that is rich and great and mighty, and to smooth them up with falsehoods and applauses. Flattering and tale-bearing is many men's trade.

[3.] Fear of men and distrust of God. This puts many upon their shifts to avoid their displeasure: Deut. xxxiii. 29, 'Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;' that is, feignedly submit themselves to thee.

[4.] Covetousness: Prov. xxi. 6, 'The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.'

[5.] Doing that which we are ashamed to own; as naughty children and servants commit faults, and then cover them with a lie. Now it is dangerous to stand in need of a lie to help us out; the devil hath a tie upon you.

## SERMON XII.

*Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.*—EPH. v. 10.

THE apostle goeth on further to declare what is required of them that walk as children of the light. Our duty consists of two parts—eschewing evil and doing good. How to do good is shown in this verse; what eschewing evil is required of us, the next verse sheweth.

In the words observe—

1. The act, *δοκιμάζοντες*, 'Proving.'

2. The object, *τὸ εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ*, 'What is acceptable (or well-pleasing) to the Lord Christ.'



I. The act, 'proving.' The word signifieth so to prove as to approve and practise.

1. Sometimes it signifieth bare searching or examining : 1 Thes. v. 21, 'Prove all things.' So it noteth an accurate and continual study and endeavour to know God's will, by reading and meditating : Ps. i. 2, 'And in that law doth he meditate day and night.' By hearing and trying, as the Bereans are commended, Acts xvii. 11, 'In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' By praying and earnest seeking : Prov. ii. 3, 4, 'Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and listest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure.' This, and the use of all other holy means, is the searching and examining commended to us.

2. Proving is put for approving : Rom. ii. 18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent.' We must not examine only, but approve what is good and true.

3. Taking upon ourselves an obligation to practise it : Rom. xii. 2, 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' The meaning is, that you may understand and perform your duty : Phil. i. 10, 'That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.' Approve by adopting into your manners and practices : it is *δοκιμάζετε*, the same word. Therefore, besides proving and approving, there must be performing, at least an endeavour ; otherwise it is a ridiculous thing, and that which will never stand us in any stead, to examine what is pleasing to God, and practise the contrary.

II. The object, that which is pleasing or 'acceptable to the Lord.' There is a difference between things.

1. Some things utterly displease God, as sin : 2 Sam. xi. 27, 'But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.'

2. Some things are not displeasing unto God, as all natural and indifferent actions, which are not forbidden, but allowed by him : Ecces. ix. 7, 'Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart ; for God now accepteth thy works.'

3. Other things are commanded by him by a positive law, but have no natural goodness in themselves, setting aside God's command. Now these things are pleasing to God, as man performeth his required duty ; but not so pleasing as the weighty things of the law, which have a moral good in them, if God had given no express command in the case. So it is said, Rom. xiv. 17, 18, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.' Mercifulness, peaceableness, delight to do good one to another, these are acts of obedience to Christ, and for his sake will be accepted with God, and are of good report with men. So morals must be preferred before rituals, and the great evangelical duties before moral ; as love to God and faith in Christ before acts of goodness and righteousness to men ; 'For without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. So Acts x. 35, 'But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.'

4. There are some things which do most please God, as things eminently good are acceptable to him in the highest degree; as, for instance, faith in Christ is pleasing to God, but a strong faith is more acceptable than a weak, which needeth props and crutches: John xx. 29, 'Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;' that is more pleasing and acceptable to God. So love to God is also an acceptable thing, but a fervent love doth more please him: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him;' Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' So for obedience to God: 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.' So for duties to men; the apostle had mentioned 'goodness, righteousness, and truth,' now 'proving what is acceptable to God;' that is, what is the eminent discovery of any of these graces, that you may excel in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. A renewed man should practise all christian graces and virtues in the highest degree, that he may be more pleasing unto God, that he may be eminent in the faith and love of Christ, and goodness and righteousness to men. Therefore we should not barely inquire what is our duty, but what is well-pleasing and most acceptable to God.

*Doct.* That proving what is acceptable to God is one great duty which belongeth to the children of light.

I shall explain this point by these considerations—

First, Our great end and scope should be to please God, and be accepted with him. The apostle speaketh in his own name, and in the name of all that are like-minded with himself: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' That is a christian's scope and work, and this he carrieth on living or dying. In the body it is his business to please God, out of the body it is his happiness to be accepted with him. While he is in the body, he would be found still in a course of pleasing God; and when he goeth out of the body, he would be found in a state of well-pleasedness and acceptation; one cannot be without the other. And it must needs be so—

1. With respect to God, whose favour is our happiness, whose wrath is our misery, upon whom we depend for life and being and all things. Dependence begets observance. Men take themselves to be obliged to please those on whom they have their whole dependence, and are very careful not to offend them, if possible; and if they be offended, to be speedily reconciled to them. As the men of Tyre, Acts xii. 20, when Herod was highly displeased with them, 'They came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' The matter stands thus between us and God, his displeasure is our destruction: 1 Cor. x. 5, 'And with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.' His being pleased is our



happiness, both here and hereafter. Here we need him, his presence with us, to direct us in our doubts, to relieve us in our straits, to supply us in our wants, to comfort us in all our troubles, and to strengthen us against our weaknesses. Now they that would have the comfort of God's presence and company in all conditions, and have so much to do with God in the world, they ought to set themselves to please God, and observe his will in all things according to his word: John viii. 29, 'And he that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that please him;' 1 John iii. 22, 'And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.' And hereafter our happiness lieth in our presence with God; and indeed the one cannot be without the other. None can live with God hereafter but those that take care to please God before they go hence: Heb. xi. 5, 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.'

2. With respect to man, who may be considered either as to his first creation or renovation by Christ. The first creation infers an obligation, our renovation by Christ an inclination to do things *grata Deo*, acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

[1.] As we are creatures. We were made and sent into the world for this end, that we might approve ourselves by a constant course of obedience to the God that made us, and finally be accepted with him, and received into his glory. The wise God made nothing in vain; and surely he made not man to fill up the number of things, as stones; nor to increase in growth and stature, as plants; nor to eat and drink, and serve appetites, as beasts; but he made us to serve and please and glorify him: Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' All creatures were made to glorify him in their several capacities: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'

[2.] As we are new creatures we own the old obligation; for we enter into covenant with God to become his servants; and faithful servants have this only aim, to please their master. Therefore all our aim must be, that we may be acceptable unto the Lord; for by entering into covenant we 'choose the things that please him,' Isa. lvi. 4. This is the fixed determination of our souls. We enter into covenant with God that we may become his and do his will. So that we do not only own the obligation, but by the grace of renovation we receive both direction and inclination to do what is pleasing to God. Direction, this is the effect of the renovation of our minds: Rom. xii. 2, 'But be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' A man in his pure naturals is neither able savingly to understand or do the will of God, but by grace he is fitted for both. Take grace as light, and it fits us to receive God's counsel and direction; and therefore the apostle saith here, 'Ye are light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, proving what is acceptable to the Lord.' Take grace as strength, and it enableth and inclineth us to do what is pleasing in his sight: Heb. xii. 28, 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with rever-

ence and godly fear.' For it inclineth us to make his glory our scope, and his will our rule ; for the tendency of the new creature is to live to God.

3. With respect to the thing itself. The seeking to please God and be accepted with him is so necessary and profitable to us that—

[1.] We cannot be sincere unless this be our aim and scope. One main difference between the sincere and hypocrite is in the end and scope. The one seeketh the approbation of men, the other the approbation of God ; the one is fleshly wisdom, the other is godly simplicity and sincerity : 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Godly sincerity is making God our witness, approver, and judge. He is sincere whose religion beginneth and endeth in God, acts in truth from God, and purely for God.

[2.] This maketh us serious and watchful, and to keep close to our duty ; for the aptitude and fitness of the means is judged of and measured by the end. When we have fixed our end and scope to please God, we will address ourselves to such means as are fitted to that end, and make straight towards it without any wandering. If it be our great end to be accepted with God, and please God, we will take the more care of our actions, that they be agreeable to his will. Whereas otherwise we live at peradventure, neither taking care that we may not offend : Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue ; I kept my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.' Nor humbling ourselves when we have offended : Jer. viii. 6, 'No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done ?' So that the exercise both of watchfulness and repentance dependeth on frequent reflections upon our end.

[3.] This will solace and comfort us under the difficulties of obedience. As (1.) When it is troublesome to confine our desires and actions within the compass of our rule ; but when we consider we are not to please the flesh, but to please God, it will help us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to live in a constant course of self-denying obedience. Otherwise, Rom. viii. 8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.' They have another master, the corrupt nature within them, the desires of which they seek to gratify ; they are debtors to another lord, ver. 12. So (2.) In reproaches. Men are displeased with a faithful thorough obedience to God, which not only the carnal world, but the spiritual part of the world, so far as it is carnal, disliketh. Therefore when we are censured and traduced, 1 Cor. iv. 13, 'Being defamed, we entreat : we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day.' If God will count me faithful, it is no matter what the world thinketh of me. So (3.) In an afflicted estate. The desire and aim to please God maketh us indifferent to all conditions : Phil. i. 20, 'So Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.' As a traveller taketh the way as he findeth it, foul or fair, so it conduceth to the end of his journey. So that it is absolutely necessary to fix this as our end and scope.

Secondly, We please God by doing what he hath required of us in his word. There are certain things evident by the light of nature



which belong to our duty ; these must not be overlooked : Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?' The things there mentioned are evident by the light of nature. That we should carry ourselves justly towards men, and with reverence and obedience to the divine majesty, is evident by the light of nature, as well as scripture. But the revelation that he hath made of our duty to us by the word is more clear, full, and certain.

1. It is more clear : Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' The use of a lamp is by night, and the light of the sun shineth by day. Whether it be by day or night with us, we clearly understand our duty by the word of God ; in all conditions we may know there how to behave ourselves. Once more, the word 'path' noteth our general choice and course of life ; the word 'feet' our particular actions. Now whether the matter that we would be informed of concerneth our choice of the way that leadeth to true happiness, or else the direction of any particular action of ours, still the word directeth a humble and well-disposed mind. So that here our duty is clearly stated ; and if a man standeth in awe of the word, and be not divided between conscience on the one side, and lusts and interests on the other, he cannot easily remain in doubtfulness, or miscarry.

2. It is more full ; for the book of nature is blurred by man's apostasy from God, and degeneration from his primitive excellency ; and our chief good and last end being altered by sin, we strangely mistake things, and weighing them in the balance of the flesh, which we seek to please, we put light for darkness and evil for good : Isa. v. 20, 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter ;' and so miserably grope in the dark, and cannot see clearly our way to true happiness. And besides, man's condition is such, that he needeth a supernatural remedy by a redeemer, which, depending on the mere grace of God, cannot be found out by bare natural light ; for natural light can only judge of things necessary, and not of such things as depend upon the arbitrary will and love of God, as our redemption doth : John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Besides, nature is dark in things proper to its cognisance. The great lines of our duty are fair and legible, the outward work is written upon our hearts : Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' Abstinence from gross sins, performance of external duties, some notices of good and evil, are escaped out of the ruins of the fall, and serve in part to convince of sin and mind us of our duty ; but that full, entire, spiritual obedience which is due to God is not known by nature. Therefore, besides the candle of the Lord within us, which is reason, God hath set up a lamp in his sanctuary, which is the scripture, to direct us in the way to heaven ; and this is clear and full, and compriseth all that is necessary to our duty and happiness.

3. It is more certain, as having a greater stamp and impress of God

upon it. Everything that hath passed God's hand discovereth its author. The light of nature sheweth itself to be of God, much more the light of scripture, wherein he hath discovered more of his wisdom, goodness and power, as being such a revelation of the mind of God as is fit for God to give and us to receive, suited to the nature of God, to preserve a due honour, esteem and reverence of his blessed majesty, and exactly calculated for our necessities, to teach us the way of recovering out of sin, and obtaining our true and proper happiness, and coming attested to us with such evidence from heaven as we cannot rationally withstand: 2 Peter i. 19, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' It is surer than the light of nature, as not liable to such debate and uncertainty, which must be cleared before man's duty can be stated to him; and more sure than miracles, oracles, visions, as being put into writing; and a faithful record, as the constant measure, standard, and rule of faith and manners for the use of God's people in all ages. Now it is good to see how David compareth those two revelations of the mind of God, Ps. xix., where he first admireth the brightness of the sun, and then the purity of the law; the joining of both which meditations sheweth that the world can be as ill without the word of God as without the light of the sun. What would this inferior world be without the light of the sun, but a great cave and obscure dungeon, where men would creep up and down like worms out of their holes? And besides, the comparing of both together sheweth that there are two books wherein we shall do well to study, and both made by God himself, and both manifesting and discovering God to the world—the book of nature and the book of scripture. You cannot look upon the book of the creatures, but in every page and line you will find this truth presented to your eyes, that there is an infinite eternal power that made all things, and is to be owned, revered, worshipped, and obeyed by us; this is enough to leave the world without excuse. But in the book of the word you may see more of God and the way to enjoy him. This doth more powerfully convince man of his misery, and clearly show him his remedy. The use which the psalmist makes of these books is notable; of the first, to admire the glory of God by the beauty of the heavens; of the second, to humble and awe man by the purity and strictness of the law, as all religion lieth in the knowledge of God and ourselves. This latter book being more perfect, should be our daily study, to prevent error and mistake, and that we may get the true knowledge of God's will; for many do many things out of zeal and religion which God abhorreth: John xvi. 2, 'The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.' And others obtrude many things on the faith of believers without warrant: Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Examine all things by the rule of God's word, what is conformable to his will, what not, without suffering yourselves to be deceived by false opinions or persuasions. And besides, in our practice we may know what is acceptable, either as to our speeches or actions. As to our speeches: Prov. x. 32, 'The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked



speaketh frowardness ;' that is, they know what is acceptable to God ; they are instructed out of his word how to order their speech for profit, that it may be good, and minister grace to the hearers ; others easily bewray the corruption of their hearts by their tongues. So for all our actions towards God and men. For worship, God accepteth that which he hath required ; other things are vain oblations : Isa. i. 12, 13, ' When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.' And for our conversation with men, how to show forth righteousness, goodness and truth, we may know what is the will of God in his word ; this rule will teach us : Gal. vi. 16, ' As many as walk according to this rule,' &c. Our rule is not left indifferent for us to choose, nor arbitrary for us to impose, but it is fixed in the word of God revealed in the scripture.

Thirdly, If we would know God's mind revealed in his word, we must use search and trial. Δοκιμάζοντες, 'proving,' noteth great diligence and care that we may know the mind of God ; for it greatly importeth us, and we are often pressed to it : 1 Thes. v. 21, ' Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' If we see but a piece of money that hath the king's image stamped upon it, we bring it to the touchstone to see if it be right : do so with doctrines and practices, bring them to the law and to the testimony, see how they agree with God's word : 1 John iv. 1, ' Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.' Every man that teacheth, some spirit or other cometh upon him ; therefore try what kind of spirit it is, whether it be a formal worldly spirit, as some fashion their religion according to the world, or a heavenly spirit, which is of God ; whether it be a spirit of bitterness against the saints, or a spirit of love, meekness, and gospel sincerity. This is the course we must take if we would know the mind of God in doubtful matters. We must seriously weigh all things in the balance of the sanctuary, read, hear, confer, pray, meditate, use all holy means to know God's will.

I will—(1.) Prove this is a christian's duty ; (2.) State it.

1. That it is every christian's duty, in reference to his own warrant and settlement of conscience, to use a judgment of discretion, and not to depend upon the judgment of others ; yea, not to satisfy himself barely with the public judgment of the church, but to try things, that he may know that he is in God's way, and wherein he shall be approved and accepted of him.

[1.] Certainly every one that feareth God should be acquainted with his word, and have his senses exercised therein, that by long conversation in holy things he may come to have a discerning faculty. The apostle speaketh of some, Heb. v. 14, ' That have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil ;' which are gotten by long use. Therefore much study, meditation, and attention is necessary to find out the true sense and meaning of God's word, that we may discern between good and evil. And still this habit is more to be increased in us. We are told in the book of Job, chap. xxxiv. 3, ' The ear trieth words,

as the mouth tasteth meat.' But it had need be a judicious ear that shall as readily distinguish doctrines as the mouth doth meats, as they are hurtful and noxious to us. Now christians being to have this ear of discretion, to try and judge of what is spoken to them, they should be much acquainted with the word of God, to get this habit of spiritual prudence: Prov. xiv. 15, 'The simple believeth every word; but a prudent man looketh well to his going.' Christians should be men of experience and knowledge, free from the itch of fancies and novelties, and free from the distempers of passions, prejudices, and interests, or whatsoever may corrupt their taste. On the other side, God complaineth that his people were strangers to his law: Hosea viii. 12, 'I have written unto them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' We should not be strangers to the scriptures; every one (especially in a disputing age, wherein sects abound), according to his measure, should be satisfied of the truth which he professeth, that he be not deceived, and carried away with every foolish insinuation, and so embrace Leah for Rachel, Babel for Sion, and every fond suggestion for the truths of God.

[2.] Because we are not to take up opinions by chance, but by choice: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, ask for the good old paths, Where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.' Men in a tempest are sometimes cast upon a place of safety, rather than make thither out of intention and foresight; therefore a man needeth to search and try things; the more he receiveth truth upon evidence, the more firm is his assent, and the more steady and constant is his practice; for then he hath (2 Peter iii. 17) 'a steadfastness of his own;' he doth not stand by the steadfastness of others, or the common consent; he hath proper reasons within himself to sway his assent, or command his practice; therefore a christian is to prove and try all things.

[3.] The judgment of others will be no plea for us in the last day, if we be wrong; for we are to follow the dictates of our own consciences. I say not that we are to follow our own private fancies, but conscience enlightened by the word. So 'the spiritual man judgeth all things,' 1 Cor. ii. 15; that is, for his own satisfaction, otherwise it will not excuse us that we depended on the judgment of others: 'If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch,' Mat. xv. 14. Not only one, but both; not only the blind leader and guide, but those that are led by them into a wrong way; it endeth at last in perdition.

2. I will state it, since many abuse this principle of trying all things, and upon the pretence of it give over themselves to a vertiginous spirit, wandering in a maze of errors, till at length they come not only to despise their guides, and all the helps which God hath offered in the church, but to cast off all fear of God, and sense of religion itself. Therefore I shall state it.

[1.] We should be so far confirmed in principles and supreme truths, that we should be more ready to maintain than examine them and commit them to the uncertainty of dispute. In things clear and evident, it is a madness to be still doubting and making inquiries: Deut. xii. 30, 'And that thou inquire not after their gods.' It is dangerous to loosen foundation-stones.



[2.] We must not be so still trying and proving as to hold nothing certain in religion. This is to be 'ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. iii. 7, and to turn the sureness of the christian faith into a mere scepticism, and distract our minds still with new inquiries.

[3.] Not to try so as to cast ourselves on a temptation. Men take occasion hence to run through all sects and opinions in religion. Why? They say they must try all things; that is, as they interpret it, run into the mouth of danger, and think no harm will come of it. No; the meaning is, in these things which by the providence of God are propounded to you for truths, and come to you in the way of an ordinance: Acts xvii. 11, 'These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.' Or if cast by necessary ordinary conversation on differing parties; or when doubts and scruples arise in our minds. Smothering of doubts breedeth atheism and hardness of heart. Or as to the present truth: 2 Peter i. 12, 'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of those things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.' So that a man is not to seek snares, and cast himself upon temptations, but when God in his providence puts him in such places and times where satisfaction is necessary, he must exercise himself in the word of God, that he may distinguish between good and evil.

[4.] Some things are controversial in religion, and above the size and capacity of some men's gifts. Now for them to inquire too curiously, or to define rashly in such cases, is against the apostle's rule: Rom. xii. 3, 'For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.' These presume above their measure, and are like little children, that attempt to run before they can go; and therefore they should content themselves with such truths as concern christians in their own vocation. God's gifts are divers, as their callings are in their nature and quality different. The weak in the faith must be received and owned as christians, but not to doubtful disputations: Rom. xiv. 1, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.'

[5.] When we are to prove all things, the meaning is not that we should study controversies, and be able to answer all the cavils of the adversary. That is a special gift required of the minister; he must be able, Titus i. 9, 'To hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.' But every man is bound to search, so as to be resolved as to his own choice and practice. And though every christian cannot answer all things that are objected against the truth, yet he is to be 'fully persuaded in his own mind,' Rom. xiv. 5, and so far to look into things as may make for the settling of his conscience, that he may neither do things necessary to practice rashly, and without deliberation: Prov. xix. 2, 'That the soul be without knowledge is not good; and he that hasteneth with his feet sinneth;' nor after deliberation doubtingly:

Rom. xiv. 23, 'He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith ; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.'

[6.] We are not so to search as to depend upon our private judgment, or slight the helps which God hath left in the church for the establishing of the truth, even pastors and teachers. Them hath God left in the church, 'that we may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine,' Eph. iv. 11, 14. Men are not to despise the judgment of their teachers in matters of faith, nor rest upon it as infallible. He that hath a bad sight should not throw away his spectacles. Where helps are instituted, and have a special calling, and a special promise of a blessing, they should not be despised. In all necessary things, 'Christ's sheep hear his voice,' John x. 3. But in lower matters, they may be shrewdly mistaken, and work great trouble to the church. Avoid these rocks, and the duty is clear, and of great importance. By searching and proving the truth loseth nothing, as gold doth not by being brought to the touchstone ; but you gain much settlement, feel more power and comfort in what you know.

Fourthly, We must search and try, that we may walk as children of the light. The night was made for rest ; the light is not given us for rest and idleness, but for work. The apostle prayeth for the Colossians, that they 'might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 9, 10. That is the end of knowledge : Isa. ii. 3, 'He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ;' for the end of learning is practice.

1. The more we fix this end, the sooner shall we get knowledge, and the more will it be increased to us. John vii. 17, he that will do the will of God shall know what doctrine is of God. A humble holy heart, resolved to practise whatsoever shall be the will of God, will not be long left in doubt ; the more you make conscience of knowing truths, you shall know more.

2. As we shall know sooner, so we shall know better ; we shall approve the truth in our consciences, and find the comfort of what we know in our own souls, if we pursue the practice of it : Phil. i. 9, 10, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' *αἰσθήσει*, in all sense, 'that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.' We know our duty by the word, but we find the goodness of it by practice and experience.

3. We are not else good faithful servants to God : Luke xii. 47, 'And that servant which knoweth his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' On the other side, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' First have, and then keep. Therefore we must search out what is pleasing to God, that we may do it. Knowledge is not to be sought that we may be puffed up with it, and rest in mere knowing, and so please ourselves with idle and useless speculations, but to govern and order our practice.

Use 1. Is for information.



1. That the judgment of discretion must be allowed to all christians. In controversies about religion it is usually asked, Who shall be judge? The church hath a public judgment what doctrines are to be publicly recommended; but every man hath *judicium discretionis*, a judgment of discretion for himself. God hath given every man a taste for his body, to discern what is wholesome and to discern what is noxious, and so also for his soul and conscience.

2. That the new creature hath great advantages above others of knowing the truth. The Holy Spirit dwelleth in them: 1 John ii. 20, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.' They are light in the Lord; they may go to God for direction with more boldness: Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.' They have a promise: Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant;' Hosea xiv. 9, 'For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.' The sanctifying Spirit is given to sanctify us, to give us the saving knowledge of God by the word. They know the truths contained there clearly and effectually, which others know superficially.

3. That it is not easy to acquit ourselves as children of the light; much study and search into the scriptures is required of us: Ps. i. 2, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in that law doth he meditate day and night. And much heedfulness, that we walk accordingly; much watchfulness over our hearts: Prov. iv. 23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence;' and our ways, ver. 26, 'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.'

*Use 2.* Is for reproof to several sorts.

1. Some that take no care to know their duty. This is great negligence, or downright hypocrisy: 2 Peter iii. 5, 'But this they are willingly ignorant of;' which in a matter of such importance is damnable: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall they escape which neglect so great salvation?' They will not inquire, because they have a mind to hate, or no mind to embrace.

2. Some that walk at peradventure, and live rashly, as governed by passion, lust, and appetite, rather than any sure and steady direction: Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not iniquity have dominion over me.' These cannot escape reigning sins.

3. Some are out in the end, either please the flesh or the lusts of man. The rule is not, what will please the flesh, but to do the will of God: 1 Peter iv. 2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' Not what is acceptable to men, but what is pleasing to God: Gal. i. 10, 'For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.'

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## SERMON XIII.

*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—EPH. v. 11.*

THERE are two parts of the spiritual life—things to be done, and things to be avoided; in both the children of light must show their fidelity to God, in doing good and avoiding evil. Of the first we have spoken already in ver. 10, and have showed that it is not enough to do a few good things, to which all consent, but we must diligently search and find out what is acceptable and well-pleasing to God. I now come to the second branch of our duty, avoiding evil, ‘And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’ Wherein take notice—

1. Of the object, or what is forbidden, ‘The unfruitful works of darkness.’

2. Our duty and carriage about it, in two things—

[1.] ‘Have no fellowship with them,’ have nothing to do with them.

[2.] ‘But rather reprove them;’ that is, by all means show that you utterly dislike that course of life.

*Doct.* That the children of light should live in a perfect abhorrence of, and stand at a great distance from, the unfruitful works of darkness.

1. I shall explain.

2. Prove this point.

I. For the explication; and there—(1.) The object; (2.) The acts of duty about it.

First, For the object. We have a general and unlimited expression, ‘The unfruitful works of darkness.’ But what they are we may collect from the context, ‘Uncleanness, fornication, evil concupiscence,’ &c.; and Rom. xiii. 12, 13, the apostle reckoneth up other things: ‘Let us cast off the works of darkness, &c., and let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.’ These and suchlike heathen practices are such as the apostle intendeth.

Now in this expression you may take notice of two things—(1.) They are called ‘works of darkness;’ (2.) They are said to be ‘unfruitful.’

1. They are called ‘works of darkness’ for these reasons—

[1.] Because they are done by men in their carnal estate, who are destitute of the Spirit of God, and all saving knowledge of his will. The corrupt estate of nature is called darkness, as the renewed estate is called light: 1 Peter ii. 9, ‘He hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ And chiefly because the one live in ignorance, and the other estate beginneth with the illumination of the Holy Spirit; and therefore these sins are called ‘works of darkness,’ because ignorance is the mother of them. Did men know the amiable nature of God, the purity of his holy law, the matchless love of Christ, the true worth of souls, the blessedness of eternal life, and the danger of perishing for ever, it would spoil the devil’s works, and he could not have



such a hand over them as usually he hath : 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,' 1 Peter i. 14. Ignorance is the mother of profaneness; they neither know the terror nor the sweetness of the Lord, and therefore wallow in their impurities. Light is an awing thing; when once men come to the knowledge of the truth, they are ashamed of what they practised before. But how hard a matter is it to make men understand or regard anything while ignorant, and destitute of saving knowledge!

[2.] Because they are suggested by the temptations of the devil, who is the prince of darkness, and the ruler of the darkness of this world; and therefore called 'his lusts,' John viii. 44; 'his works,' 1 John iii. 8. He enticed the world of mankind from God, and still detaineth them by their slavery to their lusts. Did men know whose work they are a-doing they would sooner desist. The devil is the great architect of all wickedness, and the first mover of it; though carnal men do not what they do in love to him, but their own flesh, yet it is he sets them a-work, and cheateth them into rebellion against God, and abuseth the ignorance and error of their minds to draw them to these sins.

[3.] Because they cannot endure the light, but seek the veil and covert of secrecy. There is a threefold light—

(1.) Natural. They rebel against this light: Job xxiv. 13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof;' and ver. 17, 'For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death.' He meaneth by light there the light of the sun or of the day; and he instanceth in two sorts of sinners, the robber and murderer, who do their pranks mostly in the night; and the adulterer, who waiteth for the twilight; and he saith to both of them, 'the morning is to them as the shadow of death.' Their actions are so shameful and infamous that they dare not be seen in them. And the apostle telleth us, 1 Thes. v. 7, that 'they who are drunken are drunken in the night.' The greatest lovers and approvers of sin are ashamed to do it openly. There is not only a fear of danger, but a shame of doing actions so unworthy a man publicly. Till the conscience of right and wrong, honesty and dishonesty, be wholly extinct in their hearts, there is a natural bashfulness which maketh them shun the light of the day. They are conscious to themselves that sin is an abominable thing, and punishable in all civil societies. Though their endeavour to commit it secretly sheweth their atheism, in that they seek to hide it from the eye of the world, and regard not the eye of God that is upon them, yet their affecting the veil of darkness and secrecy sheweth this, that they have an apprehension that sin is evil.

(2.) Light spiritual, the light of God's word: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The gospel hath not only a refreshing light to comfort the penitent, but a reprov'ing and discovering light to trouble the sinner; and therefore before men feel it they fear it, and are loath to have their guilt revived. An unsound heart shuns all means of searching and knowing itself, which shows that those practices wherein they allow themselves are deeds of darkness, stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret.

(3.) There is another light, and that may be called practical, or the light of a holy conversation: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.' The truly godly are an awe to the wicked; for in holy and diligent believers religion is exemplified. A christian is or should be a living image of God, and so a powerful conviction of the ungodly; and the more men know them, the greater excellency will they see, and the greater efficacy of conviction will they feel, and their own practices are more shamed and disgraced. Now these sins cannot endure this light that shineth into the consciences of them that commit them, out of the conversations of the godly; therefore they either stand aloof out of prejudice, and condemn them by hearsay and general rumour, or seek to obscure this light by contumelies and slanders: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' For men speak to disgrace that excellency which they will not imitate; they spend their time in satisfying their lusts, and are troubled that others will not do the like, but seek after another society.

[4.] Because these men are condemned to everlasting darkness; for if they live and die in these sins without repentance, they are unavoidably cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, as the way of the godly is compared to a growing light, so the way of the wicked to an increasing darkness: Prov. iv. 18, 19, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble.' The morning light is always growing until it cometh to the mid-day and noon, when the sun is in its greatest strength and brightness, and the day in its perfection: so the righteous increase in grace more and more, and go from strength to strength, till they come to their perfect estate. Now on the contrary, 'the way of the wicked is as darkness.' As the evening twilight increaseth to midnight or the thickest darkness, so they go on from sin to sin till they have plunged themselves into everlasting destruction; for contraries must be explained in the same manner.

2. These are said to be unfruitful by a *μελῶσις*, that is, damnable; as Heb. xiii. 17, 'That is unprofitable for you.' The meaning is, hurtful and pernicious; however, the expression is emphatical. These works produce not only no good fruit, but certainly bring forth evil fruit, and prove bitterness in the end. So the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' There is no solid fruit and benefit to be gotten by sin; it bringeth nothing but disgrace, shame, loss of time, strength and estate, and hereafter eternal death: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Which is to be heeded by us, that we may not be inveigled by its pleasant and deceitful baits. Sin promiseth much, but performeth nothing, and therefore is often called deceitful; as Eph. iv. 22, 'Deceitful lusts;' Heb. iii. 13, 'The deceitfulness of sin.' Sin smileth upon the soul with enticing blandishments. Satan told our first parents, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5; and still we promise ourselves something from sin, some contentment, some profit; for no man



would be wicked gratis, merely for his mind's sake, or without an aim at some further end. Mere evil, as evil, cannot be the object of choice; there is some fruit or benefit expected in all that we do, but sin will never make good its word to us.

[1.] It doth not answer expectation; the sinner looketh for more contentment and satisfaction than he doth enjoy: Ecces. v. 16, 'And what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?' It is a fruitless enterprise; so that very experience is enough to confute it; and that is one reason why objects of sin are loathed when we have our fill of them: 2 Sam. xiii. 15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he loved her.' Men's eyes are opened, and when the lust is satisfied, it beginneth to be contemned; they see what horror of conscience they have brought upon themselves. Reason taketh the throne again when lust is satisfied, and scourgeth the soul with bitter remorse; the fruit is shameful.

[2.] It is not valuable; the profit will not counterbalance the loss, nor the pleasure the pain: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Men hazard their souls, and it may be gain a little wealth; that is the worst bargain a man can make. Besides, this cometh with a curse, that within a little while eateth it out: Prov. x. 2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit nothing.' So it is in the eye of faith at least a fruitless enterprise to seek to grow rich by sin. Compare the pleasure and pain; the pleasure is a short contentment, that is gone as soon as it cometh, and when it is gone it is a thing of nothing, but the pain is eternal. But to speak of what is of present feeling; it raiseth a tempest and storm in the conscience, which is not easily allayed: Hosea viii. 7, 'For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.' The pleasure and fancy in sin is lost as soon as enjoyed, but the sting is not so soon gone. The crop doth answer the seed, and usually with increase. They that sow the wind can expect to reap nothing but the wind; yet they reap the whirlwind. A man that feels the gripes of a surfeit buyeth his pleasant meat at a dear rate; and what a sorry purchase doth he make that loseth his time and strength, and after all this expense gets nothing but horror of conscience and trouble of mind! Certainly men would not lie so long in sin if they would recollect themselves and consider, What have I gotten since I was the devil's bond-slave, but a blind mind, a troubled conscience, and a hard heart, and it may be shame and disgrace in the world? what a folly is it to pursue that which will bring me no profit! One beginneth to be awakened when once he cometh to say, Job xxxiii. 27, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profiteth me not.' Whatsoever sin promiseth or sinners fancy, sin at length will be found to be an unprofitable course, yea, utterly destructive. What do men get by drinking, gaming, chambering and wantonness? what by all the lusts of youth, and the bold attempts of riper years, but an ill name and a worse conscience, a diseased body, and many times an entangled and maimed estate; a doubtful heart, and at length the mist of darkness is reserved for them for ever? Oh, that we could oftener put this question, Ecces. ii. 2, 'What doeth it?' what shall I gain by these vain delights and

sinful practices? We are often quarrelling with God; what profit is it to serve the Almighty? Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' Job xxi. 15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?' surely it would make us stop in a way of sin if we did ask, What profit? If it be delightful to the sensual part, in the end it biteth like a serpent: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil.' As Elisha dealt with the Syrian army, he blinded them all the way, till he had brought them into the midst of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 20, then he opened their eyes that they might see their danger; so Satan blindeth sinners till they come to destruction, and then conscience filleth them with horror and despairing fears, and the enchantment is dissolved, and they awake in flames and horror.

Secondly, The acts of our duty about it; and they are two—(1.) That we must have no fellowship with them; (2.) But reprove them rather.

1. That we must have no fellowship with them in evil. To understand that, we must consider how many ways we have fellowship with them.

[1.] If we do the same things that others do. He that committeth sin alone, and without example, is a sinner; but he that committeth sin after the example of others hath fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, joineth with others to promote the devil's kingdom in the world; therefore have no fellowship, give not a bad example to others, and follow it not if given by others; for by giving and taking evil example, there is a fellowship between sinners, and they drive on a common trade, whether they lay their heads together about it, yea or no; therefore we are not to have fellowship in sin, in whole or in part, in a greater or in a lesser measure. No; we are to turn from all sin with detestation: Isa. xxx. 22, 'Get ye hence;' Hosea xiv. 8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Yea, we must avoid the very 'appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. v. 22; for no sin, or anything like it, will become the children of light. Well, then, this is the principal sense; do not the same things; whosoever hath a hand in the sin will have a share in the punishment.

[2.] If we be accessory to the sins of others, which we may be many ways. I touched upon it, ver. 7; but we must not be so, for every agent is known to God, and cannot escape his discovery and punishment; not the secret contrivers and counsellors, as Jonadab to Amnon, Achitophel to Absalom, Jezebel to Ahab; not the actors and executioners, as the elders of Israel, and by their procurement the sons of Belial employed by Jezebel in the murder of Naboth; not the abettors and assistants, as Joab and Abiathar in Adonijah's treason; for God can search into the deepest secrets, and hath knowledge both of the offenders, and the quality and measure of their offence, and will render to every one accordingly. Therefore for a warning, let us see how we may have any fellowship in these things, which are so hateful to God, and do so ill become our renewed estate.

(1.) If we counsel, persuade, allure, or entice others to sin. These are Satan's decoys, who being ensnared themselves, draw others into the



net. Thus those that provoke others to drunkenness by inviting them to drink more than they would, or the necessities of nature call for, or by healing engage them to it; besides, that the first occasion of it was a heathen drink-offering, which therefore the christians refused with the danger of their lives, as several have proved: *bibamus pro salute imperatoris*. The casuists condemn it, as it is *provocatio ad æquales calices*. And we read in the book of Esther, chap. i. 8, 'And the drinking was according to law, none did compel;' that is, that none should drink more or oftener than it pleased himself. So when men stir up lust in others by lascivious speeches, or persuade others to transgress, or blow the coal in strife or contention, or allure them to any evil: Prov. i. 10, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' This was the devil's sin to tempt our first parents, Gen. iii.; and all tempters play the devil's part.

(2.) By commanding that which is evil. This is the sin of those that have power over others; as David commanded Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die, 2 Sam. xi. 15; and Joab obeyed this wicked direction, and so became guilty of innocent blood. So if parents or masters command their children or servants to do anything that is evil.

(3.) By consenting, though we be not the principal actors; as Ahab: 1 Kings xxi. 19, 'Hast thou killed, and taken possession?' Ahab is said to kill, though Jezebel laid the plot, and others executed it; yet Ahab consented, and took the benefit of it. Therefore 'Hast thou killed?'

(4.) By abetting, aiding, and assisting in the conveyance of the sin; as Jonadab assisted Amnon in getting an occasion to satisfy his lust on his sister Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. If you teach men the way, or contrive how to bring about their sin, you are accessory, and come into a fellowship of the guilt.

(5.) By applauding, approving, or praising the sin, which is the guise of flatterers: Rom. i. 32, 'They not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do it;' when men approve, applaud, and take delight in them that commit enormous practices. Yea, the prophet inveigheth against them 'that put evil for good, and good for evil; and darkness for light, and light for darkness,' Isa. v. 20; and this not so much out of error of mind, as flattery and deceit, which addeth a farther degree of wilfulness and perverseness to the sin. And to this head may be referred those that extenuate and lessen an evil to the hardening of others, that call drunkenness good-fellowship or taking a cheerful cup, gluttony good housekeeping, voluptuousness recreation or necessary refreshing, worldliness good husbandry, and revenge and duelling maintaining their honour; they honest the name of lust with love, or some other plausible term. Thus do we beguile and cheat our own souls and the souls of others by notions that countenance sin, and in effect it is but making traps for souls.

(6.) By carelessness to prevent the sin. Whether it arise out of the mere sloth of the flesh, as many have no great love to their own or others' souls, and merely for their own ease and quiet suffer them to go on in their soul-destroying wickedness; or whether it be for want of hatred of sin, as if it were not so dangerous; or neglect of the duties

of our office, as if you hold your peace and connive at them where God calleth you to speak against them, or neglect your duty as ministers and magistrates: 1 Sam. iii. 13, 'I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' So that a culpable omission may make us accessory to their sin.

2. The other duty is, 'But rather reprove them.' Now reprove we may by deed or word. The former is of chief respect in this place, for he speaketh of infidels, with whom they had not so much familiarity as to reprove them in word; and following their evil example, being the sin condemned, the opposite duty or reproof must be by contrary manners and conversation.

[1.] By deed, or the example of a holy life; as 'Noah condemned the world,' Heb. xi. 7. He might condemn them as a preacher of righteousness by his doctrine, but chiefly by preparing an ark with so much cost and diligence, and to show how necessary it was to use some means for their safety. So are we to condemn the lazy and unbelieving world by our diligence and seriousness in the heavenly life, and by our sobriety and watchfulness to reprove their indulgence to fleshly lusts and unclean practices by our christian walking.

[2.] By word, when it may be done with profit; as the apostle saith of the infidel, when he cometh into christian assemblies, 'he is condemned of all, and judged of all,' 1 Cor. xiv. 24; namely, as he heareth doctrines there contrary to his practice. But in ordinary converse we are to reprove these things also, and convince those that fall into them of the great evil they lie in: Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;' or, as it is in some translations, 'not bear sin for him.' Here are two arguments—First, You hate your brother, you have not that love to him, if you let his soul perish for want of your admonition. Secondly, You bear sin for him, contract guilt upon yourself, when by your means he might be reclaimed.

## II. The reasons of the point.

1. Because there should be a broad and sensible difference between the children of light and the children of darkness. Certainly God's aim was to distinguish and set apart a peculiar people from the riff-raff of mankind, and that not only by his decree and purpose within himself, but by some sensible and manifest difference, that should be visible and conspicuous to the world; and this not only by his own dispensations of favour and respect to the one, and not unto the other: Ps. iv. 3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;' but by their carriage and conversation: 1 John iii. 10, 'In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest;' 1 John v. 19, 'But we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' God would have us to show to whom we do belong; and therefore it doth not become the children of God to border too near upon the wicked. If the difference be not sensibly kept up, they dishonour their Father, and so the two seeds are not manifested; but it is a nice and difficult case to distinguish them, and you perplex the cause, and make it doubtful whom we shall reckon to the one or the



other sort. Surely it is a grief to the Holy Spirit that you are so like the devil and his children, and yet profess a nearness to God. Christ hath done his part to difference you from the world, and you will not declare the difference, and make it manifest. You harden the world, and they will think that to distinguish between the seeds is factious singularity, not regular zeal; and hold up their ways with the greater pretence, as justified by you. If you be proud, covetous, envious, voluptuous, backbiting, wanton, where is the difference? When God hath made a difference, you unmake it again, and confound all by walking according to the course of the world; it is a confusion of what God hath separated. God made the difference when none was, by the power of his grace, and you must keep up the difference.

2. This difference is discovered by those actions that are proper to either state; for actions are agreeable to their principle, and in actions must this difference be expressed, or how is it visible? Both show forth the influence of an unseen power, both the children of God and the children of the devil, the children of light and the children of darkness. The powers are unseen, both God and Satan; and the principles are unseen, unless they discover themselves in operations suitable: Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.' The devil driveth on his instruments furiously to act wickedness, and God would not have us flatter ourselves with an imaginary respect to him, but hath put the trial of our love upon some visible demonstration: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' Our Saviour says, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' And therefore the children of light must live in a perfect abhorrence of, and keep at a distance from, the works of darkness. Every root beareth proper fruit; we do not expect grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; but from a good tree we expect good fruit. A good tree cannot bear ill fruit, as a kindly and ordinary production: Mat. vii. 16-18, 'Ye shall know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' It is there spoken of the fruits of doctrine, but it is true also of the fruits of grace in the hearts of believers; for grace is nothing but Christ's heavenly doctrine imprinted on our hearts and minds, and there it bringeth forth fruit like itself.

3. This distinction is to be kept up on the part of the godly, and so conspicuously held forth, that they may either convince or convert the wicked. God intended that the conversations of his people should be a living instruction; as in many places: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' that is, holiness must so shine forth that the world may be convinced or converted to God. God is glorified by either, chiefly in their conversion; or if not so, in their conviction: their condemnation is justified, and it maketh the justice of his punishment

more clear and evident : Phil. ii. 15, 16, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' All God's children are lights. God is the Father of lights; Christ is the great light that came into the world; ministers are lights by office, as they dispense God's word publicly. All christians are lights by their general calling, and they are to hold forth the word of life too; that is, in their profession and practice they must discover the way to life revealed in the gospel. Some will fall in love with it, which is matter of joy to us; others will be reprov'd and convinc'd by it, which is matter of glory to God, not only in their final doom, but as their mouths are stopped, and they cannot easily bespatter religion, when they see the splendour and lovely beauty of it in your conversations. Well, then, if we have such a charge upon us, and it be such a blessed work to bring about the salvation of others, we ought to keep at a great distance from the works of darkness; for if our deeds be like theirs, how do we convert or convince them? Those that do not desire to do good to others are not children of light, and they that blemish their conversations with the pollutions of the world do not behave themselves as children of light. When the sun and moon are eclipsed, and lose their light, it sets the world on wondering; and it is observed of all when godly men miscarry. See another place, 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversations honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

4. The children of God are fitted and prepared for this, to abstain from sin. If wicked men be afraid or ashamed to do these things in the light of the sun, and they cannot easily overcome the wrestlings of conscience, how can the children of God do these things, who have the light of grace? If conscience give back when we are tempted to foul sins, how much more will the new nature give back with great abhorrence? 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' He cannot bring his heart to it. That may be justly expected from men, which their principles sufficiently prompt them unto. It is true there is such a weakness in God's children that they need to be exhorted, and yet such an aversion from sin that it may be justly expected they should have no fellowship with the works of darkness. There is flesh in us as well as Spirit, and christians may act from either principle; but the Spirit is in predominancy, or else we are not true christians. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the motions and operations of the flesh should be overruled and suppressed. There is indeed too much advantage for Satan to work upon by our carnality and averseness from God, our nearness to this world, and strangeness to the world to come; but being enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, there is more to check these temptations.

5. The inconveniencies are great that will follow if God's children should have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; our pretended communion with God will be interrupted: 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the



light, we have fellowship one with another.' The name of God is dishonoured, 2 Sam. xii. 14; the world is hardened and justified, Ezek. xvi. 52; religion is slandered. The wicked labour to cover this light with clouds of disgrace and detraction: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'That whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God.' They will be glad to find an occasion from your miscarriage. Your own peace is lost: Ps. li. 8-12, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.'

*Use.* Is to press the two duties in the text.

1. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;' that is, do not join or partake in the sins of the carnal world, though they seem to be authorised by vulgar and common practice. To this end remember—

[1.] You must not do as others do, but do as God requireth. You must live by rule, not by example. Doth the law of God, by which you must be judged, allow of any sin? They are children of darkness and disobedience that 'walk according to the course of this world,' Eph. ii. 2. The Israel of God are those that walk according to rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the whole Israel of God.'

[2.] Love God, and love his law, and love his people, and the infection is prevented. Love God: Ps. xcvi. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Love his law: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' Love his people: 1 John ii. 10, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him;' that is, so far as you love him as a brother, as one that is obedient to God; otherwise the sins of a godly man may be a strong temptation to us. Therefore your love to his people must come from the two former, from a sincere love to God and his law, and then it is a help to you.

[3.] We must eschew all unnecessary and voluntary friendship and familiarity with wicked men: Ps. xxvi. 4, 'I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers;' Prov. xii. 11, 'He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.' There are two reasons of this caution. First, To prevent infection, lest you be drawn to walk in their ways; he that walketh in the sun is insensibly tanned: Prov. xxii. 24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' Agrippa by converse with Caligula the heathen emperor learned his manners; and as Caligula affected divine honour, so did Agrippa, for which God smote him that he died, as Josephus tells us. Therefore we should be as little as we can in scandalous and tempting company; if you presume to touch pitch, you cannot escape defilement. Secondly, The other reason is, that they may not be hardened in an evil course, and kept from being ashamed: 2 Thes. iii. 14, 'And have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.'

[4.] Your happiness lieth in communion with God, and communion with God we cannot have if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship

with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' God hath not promised communion to such as walk in darkness, for light and darkness have no communion one with another: 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'

2. 'But rather reprove them,' by deed and word.

[1.] By deed, spoken of before; as David convinced Saul: 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil;' and 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. You have a spirit and an excellency which they have not, though the seduced world will not easily own it.

[2.] By word. It is a duty the world cannot bear, but we must perform it: Prov. xv. 12, 'A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him; neither will he go unto the wise.' But every scorn and reproach must not deter us. Indeed, when it doth exclude some better benefit, and provoke to persecute, we may forbear: Mat. vii. 6, 'Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you;' but do it to your relations.

## SERMON XIV.

*For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.—Eph. v. 12.*

THESE words are rendered as a reason why they should 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' By 'works of darkness' he meaneth sins committed in paganism and their unconverted estate. The heathens did many things which for their filthiness were unworthy of christian ears; and that may be the reason why he himself doth not particularly and expressly mention these sins.

The practices of the unconverted heathen are set forth by a double brand—(1.) They are done of them in secret; (2.) It is a shame to speak of them, there is such a turpitude and filthiness in them.

So that in these words may be observed—(1.) Something concerning the sense and apprehension that men have of sin; (2.) Something concerning secret sins.

For the first I shall observe—

*Doct.* That all sense of right and wrong, good and evil, is not wholly extinguished in the heart of man; for here the unbelieving gentiles, though they did abominable things, yet they did them in secret, which sheweth some relics of natural conscience and shame in them.

1. Naturally we apprehend a difference between virtue and vice, good and evil; for we apprehend the one as culpable and evil, and the other



as honest and commendable. This conceit cometh not from custom and positive law, for then it could not be so universal; but from the nature of the things themselves, or the law of nature written upon our hearts: Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'These having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' For what is universally received in all the world hath a foundation in nature. If there be no difference in the things themselves, it is no more to kill a man than to kill a fly, or to rob in the woods than to hunt a hare in the fields, for a man to lie with his father's wife than to make use of lawful marriage, to obey his sense than his reason, or to be ruled by his appetite than by his conscience. But these notions are horrid and uncouth to any that knoweth himself to be a man. Besides, plain experience sheweth that we are all possessed with a desire of being, if not really, yet seemingly honest. The most wicked are offended if they be taken for such as they really are; all desire to cloak their wickedness with an appearance of probity and honesty. If this desire were not natural, it could not be so universal. This then plainly sheweth we are sensible that honour is due to virtue, and blame to sin and vice; and therefore, though we are very partial in our own cause, yet we are conscious to ourselves that such filthiness as we affect and delight to live in is culpable and punishable in all civil societies; therefore we seek to hide our practices from the world as much as we can.

2. This apprehension is most sensibly betrayed by our affections of shame and fear. *Omne malum aut timore aut pudore perfundit*—Fear and shame followeth upon the doing of evil. We read that Adam and Eve, as soon as they sinned, they were both ashamed, Gen. iii. 7, and afraid, ver. 10. Indeed, you may reduce it to one affection, which is fear, for shame is a sort of fear. Fear, properly so taken, is a fear of torment; and shame is a fear of disgrace. The one respects punishment, and the other reproof.

For plainness' sake we will handle them distinctly.

[1.] For shame, which ariseth from the consciousness of a fault, and is a fear of blame. This sheweth that nature hath blasted evil with some marks of her improbation and abhorrence. Certainly if we had no conscience of good and evil, we would as boldly avow our evil as our good; and if there were not some other reason that forbids it, we would rather endeavour to make vice creditable than virtue; for virtue cannot be exercised without difficulty, by reason of the conflicts we have with our sensual appetites and desires, which carry us out strongly to those delights and pleasures which vice yieldeth us. Yet virtue, though it be against corrupt nature, or the inclination of the flesh, hath such a power over our minds and consciences, that they give it this testimony, that sin breedeth shame and bashful inconfidence, which dampeth our mirth and cheerfulness, and goodness and honesty giveth serenity and peace, for 'the righteous is as bold as a lion.' The hypocrisy of the world attests the excellency of chastity, sobriety, and honesty; for how unclean, intemperate, and fraudulent soever men be, they are ashamed to be seen in their own colours; and so the wicked condemn themselves in those things which they allow and practise. Though the relics of natural conscience be not sufficient effectually to restrain men from evil, yet they make them ashamed of it; and though

they be not of such force as to rule our affections, yet this force and power they have upon our minds, that the vicious person is condemned in himself, and exposed to the contempt of others, if he cannot hide and conceal his disorders.

[2.] For fear. The apostle telleth us, Rom. i. 32, that men know *δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'the judgment of God,' and that 'they that do such things are worthy of death.' Men are sensible of good and evil, and the punishment God will execute upon evil. Experience sheweth the terrors which all men feel when they have committed some wickedness. There is something within that frightens us more with apprehension of vengeance than the penalties constituted by human laws; for even mighty men and great potentates in the world have felt these terrors; as Caligula and others, who could easily promise themselves exemption from man's punishment, and need not fear the severity of human laws. And where sins were committed in secret, yet they were in great fear: Ps. xiv. 5; Ps. liii. 5, 'They were in great fear where no fear was;' that is, no outward cause of fear. The apostle telleth us we are subject to this fear all our lives, Heb. ii. 14; but we feel it most at death, when most serious: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.' Nature is not fond of these fears, but seeketh to repel them; for no man findeth any pleasure in being tormented by them. Yet they stick close by us, as a natural sentiment of the evil that is in sin. Men may dissemble them, but they cannot totally suppress them; they may divert them with vain pleasures, with business or company, for a while, but they return with more importunity and violence.

3. This apprehension produceth different effects in the godly and wicked. We have an instance in the text. In the unconverted it produceth hypocrisy, in the converted shyness and abhorrence of sin. In the unconverted pagan Ephesians it produced hypocrisy; they did seek to hide what they would not avoid. Though the things were abominable, and had the marks of nature's dislike and improbation upon them, yet they committed them in secret; as many a man's heart reproacheth him, yet he goeth on still in his sins, and if he may commit them secretly, without being seen by others, they think themselves safe and secure, and for the present out of gunshot. But here is another sort of men intimated in the text; the apostle, and those like-minded with himself, all children of light, that abhor these deeds of darkness, are ashamed to mention what others are not ashamed to practise. Unbelievers have but a spark of conscience left, they know their practices are abominable, but they do them in secret. These are so far from committing these things, that they count it a shame to speak of them, or to hear them spoken of by others, it cannot be done without blushing. Children of light 'must avoid all appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. v. 22, and therefore will not mention these sins, though with a holy and honest purpose, to show their greater detestation, and lest they should awaken a gust in themselves and others, and revive some lusts. Certainly christians should show a modesty in their speech, and filthy things are better suppressed than mentioned. They that delight to speak filthily will do filthily. Briefly, the sense of the turpitude or evil of sin is in unbelievers but weak; it cannot restrain the practice, only it removeth it out of the sight of men; but in believers strong; it



doth not only restrain the practice, but even bridleth their speech concerning other men's sins.

*Use 1.* To show us the evil of sin. Two things in the text discover that—

1. It is a deed of darkness. It is done in secret, it dareth not appear in the light; the very heathen confined it to privacy, and their closest recesses. The apostle telleth us, 'They that are drunken are drunken in the night,' 1 Thes. v. 7. They chose darkness and secrecy to cover their enormities. And our Lord telleth us, John iii. 10, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.' It is meant of the light of knowledge; but withal the light of sense is the ground of the metaphor. See Job xxiv. 14, 15, 'The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.' Some principles of common honesty God hath left in corrupt nature, to restrain our headstrong inclination to evil, but it showeth also the nature of sin.

2. The other brand in the text is, it is shameful to speak of it, much more shameful to act it. If the mention of sin be so shameful a thing that it will scarce suit with the modesty of christian ears, what is it to wallow in this filthiness?

*Use 2.* It showeth how impudent and desperate in sin they are, and how much they have outgrown the heart of a man, and lost all feelings of conscience, that 'declare their sins as Sodom, and hide them not,' Isa. iii. 9; that have gotten a brazen forehead, and are impudent in sinning; as Absalom, that lay with his father's concubines on the top of the house, in the face of all Israel, 2 Sam. xvi. 22. That sin, for the matter, being incest, was very filthy, but not so great as for the impudence of the manner. The modesty of sinning gentiles shall rise in judgment, and condemn this shameless generation of christian sinners, who blush not to do deeds of darkness in the sight of the sun. The Lord complaineth, Zeph. iii. 5, 'They knew no shame;' and again, Jer. viii. 12, 'Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? They were not ashamed, neither could they blush.' These commit those sins openly which common honesty and the instinct of natural bashfulness would seek to cover. Men grow not to this impudence at first, but by several degrees they lose the apprehension of the evil of sin.

1. Satan suggesteth to us some sin, to which he findeth us by nature prone, and which he seeketh plausibly to insinuate as profitable and pleasant: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;' 2 Peter ii. 20, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning;' being entangled, are overcome.

2. This suggestion, if it be not presently resisted, breedeth in our minds a certain delectation. It is sweet in his mouth, and he hideth it under his tongue.

3. Delight moveth the lust or concupiscence, and draweth out and engageth our consent: Josh. vii. 21, 'When I saw among the spoils a

goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, then I coveted them, and took them.' The lust is stirred.

4. This impelleth and urgeth the will to action : James i. 15, 'And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.'

5. The act being finished, unless the sinner be corrected by God, or awakened by his Spirit, breedeth security : 'Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death,' James i. 15. If the sinner be corrected by God's providence, or convinced of it by his Spirit, the man is in a fair way of being recovered ; but if not, the reverence of God is lessened, men think there is no danger : Ps. x. 11, 'He said in his heart, God hath forgotten ; he hideth his face, he will never see it.' So ver. 13, 'The wicked contemn God ; he hath said in his heart, God will not require it.'

6. Security inviteth us to continue in the sin, as also to make no conscience of other sins : Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst ; the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.' A perverse will giveth way to lustings, and lustings make way for a custom, and a custom brings on a necessity.

7. This continuance and living in sin taketh away the sight and odiousness of it, and produceth hardness of heart and blindness of mind : Heb. iii. 13, 'Lest the heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.'

8. This induration and excecation, this blindness and hardness of heart, is at first partial, concerning this or that sin ; but at length general, concerning all sin ; and this begetteth that horrid impudence that men are past all shame. When by the terrible judgment of God they are let alone after their first transgression, they repeat their sins, and still the delusions of the flesh increase upon them. Therefore it is good to stop betimes, lest with swine we begin to take pleasure to wallow in this mire and filth.

*Doct. 2.* That it is the folly and madness of sinners, that know the filthiness of sin, to commit it secretly, and think themselves secure if they may escape the eye of man.

I shall prove it—

*First,* From the evil of secret sins ; although to be a bold and open sinner is in some respects more heinous than to be a secret and private sinner, because of the dishonour to God, the scandal of others, and impudence in the sinner himself. Dishonour to God : 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' The scandal of others. When a fire is kindled by our negligence, if it be kept at home and within doors, the loss is only our own ; but if the sparks fly abroad, and consume the dwellings of others, our private fault becometh a public loss and detriment. So Mat. xviii. 7, 'Woe unto the world because of offences.' So the impudence of the sinner himself : Jer. iii. 3, 'Thou hast a whore's forehead ; thou refusest to be ashamed.' A common strumpet, that hath wholly forfeited her credit, is ashamed of nothing.

Yet in other respects secret sins have the aggravations which other sins have not.



1. Because they are more against knowledge and conviction. Men are conscious to themselves that they do evil, and therefore seek a veil and covering. They would sin, but they would not have the world know of it. Now to sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a dreadful evil; for that is a sin that hath presumption in it, and presumption leaves no small guilt: Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.' Every sin, the more we understand the law, and know our duty, the more it hath of a culpable transgression; for this is knowingly and seemingly to run against God. Those that live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close, they smother checks of conscience, and plainly rebel against the light, and so are self-condemned in those practices which they secretly allow and commit.

2. This secret sinning, and with security, hath atheism annexed to it. Atheism is either a denial of God or a contempt of God.

[1.] A denial of God, which directly, deliberately, and formally cannot be done by any reasonable creature; but by denying his providence, we do in effect deny his being. This kind of atheism striketh at the root of all piety and obedience: Ps. lxxiii. 11, 'How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?' Ps. xciv. 7, 'They say, The Lord shall not see, nor doth the God of Jacob regard it;' Job xxii. 13, 'And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?' Those that live in secret sin, they do in effect deny that God doth exercise a providence and government in the world, that he doth not mind the affairs of men, or regard what is done by them; for all their care is to hide themselves from men, which is in effect to deny that God is God. Their security and hypocrisy speaketh it: Zeph. i. 12, 'I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' Men do not believe a particular inspection, because they cannot conceive how it should be, considering the distance between him and us.

[2.] A contempt of God. If they do not deny his being and providence, yet they slight his judgment; for this doing evil in secret puts far more respect upon men than upon God, whilst through the prevalency of palliated atheism they only fear men, seek to hide their sins from men, but little reckon of the all-seeing eye of God, are careless of that: Jer. ii. 26, 'The thief is ashamed when he is found;' that is, surprised by man in his theft. Now you are atheistical hypocrites when you look so much to men and so little to God. If man be once feared more than God, you will not care how much you displease God, so you do not offend man; and so you are stabbing your obedience to the very heart. But how preposterous is this! Can man damn thee? Can man fill thy conscience with terrors? Can man bid thee to depart into everlasting burnings? Why then art thou afraid of man, and not of God? Thou canst be envious in secret, declaim against God's children in secret, neglect duties in secret, be sensual in secret. O wicked wretch! art thou afraid man should know it, and not afraid God should know it? What! afraid of the

eye of man, and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldst not have a child see thee to do what God seeth thee do. This is a plain setting man above God. They seek no more than to be hid from the sight of the world.

3. The more secret any wickedness is, the more studious and premeditated; the more of deliberation there is in a sin, the greater is the sin. As David plotted first to bring about and then to hide his uncleanness from the world, 2 Sam. xi. 8; he sendeth for Uriah from the army, maketh him drunk, plotteth his murder. These sins are committed with craft and subtlety. So Job xxiv. 15, 'The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, and saith, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face.' They commit sin with resolution and forethought, and are plotting how to go about it without discovery, and so are industrious to espy their advantages. So Josh. vii. 11, 'They have stolen, and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stuff;' Acts v. 9, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of God?' In secret sins there is much premeditation, craft, and dissimulation used.

4. Many times it involveth us the more in sin; and so by seeking to cover one sin, we run into many. As Adam, to hide his sin, casts an imputation upon God obliquely: Gen. iii. 12, 'The woman which thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree.' When Sarah had secretly laughed at God's promise of giving a child, she presently covereth it with a gross lie, Gen. xviii. 15. When David had committed adultery with Uriah's wife, he laboureth to cloak it over with a fouler sin, the contriving of her husband's death. Any sin committed weakens the heart, and leaveth it the more unable to withstand a second assault; as a castle is more easily taken when a breach is once made. And sins are usually fastened one to another, like the links of a chain, so that one draweth on all the rest; and God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and permit men to fill up the measure of their iniquities. It is a fearful thing when sin hath got a tie upon a man, as it hath when we have secretly done some evil from which we cannot acquit ourselves but with some loss or shame; then we usually heap up sin upon sin to preserve our credit. There is no remedy; they are got into the devil's snare, and one sin must help them out of the other. Eudisia, wife to Theodosius junior, having received of the emperor her husband an apple of incredible bigness and beauty, gave it to one Paulinus a learned man, whom she esteemed for his parts. He not knowing from whom the empress had it, presents it as rare and extraordinary to the emperor, who sending for his wife, asketh her what was become of the apple; she, fearing her husband's displeasure, answered she had eaten it; afterward she sweareth it, and confirmeth it with oaths and imprecations. Upon this the jealous husband killeth Paulinus, and hateth his faithful wife. If she had told the truth at first, she had not fallen into the sin of perjury; but giving way to a little, she is drawn into a greater sin; her innocent friend loseth his life, she her husband's favour ever afterward.

5. Secret sins indulged often bring great mischiefs and inconveniences upon the actors of them. I shall instance only in those two mentioned in Job, chap. xxiv. 14, 15. The murderer and the adulterer.



[1.] For murder secretly plotted, it afterward cometh to light strangely. For the psalmist telleth us, 'God maketh inquisition for blood,' Ps. ix. 12. It is never carried so secretly but it cometh to light, and involveth the actors in a thousand miseries. Murders lie not long unrevenged, especially the slaughters of God's servants. But instances are so frequent, I should never make an end if I should mention them. God will hear the cry of blood. Cain gets Abel secretly into the field, and killeth him; but God saith, 'Thy brother's blood crieth to me,' Gen. iv. 10.

[2.] For adultery. Unlawful lusts usually end very tragically, as we may see in the examples of the first world, Sodom, Sichem, Israel with the Moabitish women in the desert, the war between Israel and Benjamin for violating the Levite's concubine; Samson; David, the sword departed not from his house; not to mention common stories. Whoredom is not a light sin, as carnal men take it to be; sad judgments attend it, be it committed never so secretly. This is the first argument.

Secondly, It is folly and madness, because God loveth to discover it. Our Lord telleth us, Luke xii. 2, that 'there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be known,' either here or hereafter.

1. Here God discovereth secret sins, and bringeth them to light, as he found out Achan in his sacrilege. So we are bidden to remember Lot's wife, Luke xvii. 32. Her sin was a sin committed by stealth; she would steal a glance, and look back to Sodom: Gen. xix. 26, 'She looked back from behind him, and she was turned into a pillar of salt.' Therefore let no man sin secretly. God can find us out in our secret sins. As we should make conscience of not sinning openly, so of not sinning by stealth, though the sin be acted in never so hidden and close a manner. So Num. xxxii. 23, 'Be sure that your sin will find you out.' If they hide it from the eye of the world, they think they shall never hear of their sin more: Isa. xxix. 15, 'They say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?' God seeth and knoweth all our secret counsels and designs; and in time they are discovered, to our shame and confusion. Gehazi was found out: 2 Kings v. 26, 'Went not my spirit with thee?' meaning his prophetic spirit. Ananias and Sapphira were found out by the spirit of discovery that was in the apostles, Acts v. God delighteth to discover impenitent and false-dealing hypocrites, that carry their wickedness secretly: Prov. xxvi. 26, 'Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be discovered before the congregation.' The Lord loveth to take off their disguise.

2. At the great day of account, and last judgment: Ps. l. 21, 'I will set thy sins in order before thee;' and 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart;' that is, every man's intentions and purposes. Then all will be laid open before men and angels.

Use 1. It teacheth us to make conscience of secret sins, whether they be sins of omission or sins of commission, or of a mixed nature, when a thing is done which for the matter is good, but a defect in the manner or end.

1. Sins of omission. Such was that Num. xxxii. 23, a shrinking

from their duty, or not taking lot and share with the rest of God's people. Many please themselves with the presumption of a good state before God if they do no hurt, and break not out into outrageous wickedness. Oh, but yet your condition may be dangerous if you live in the omission of any necessary known duty. You are not troubled about it for the present, yet in time it will make sad work in your souls: James iv. 17, 'To him that knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' Men have, it may be, long lived in a course of neglecting communion with God, and conscience hath been silent, but then it rageth. Mat. vi. 6, your Father seeth what you do, or not do, in secret, and accordingly will reward or punish you.

2. Sins of commission. Let us 'renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,' 2 Cor. iv. 2. Let no man think all is well because what he doth is concealed from men; or allow himself in any secret known sin. No; when you have the advantage of secrecy, you should keep up a constant reverence of God and his all-seeing eye: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Many times secrecy and solitariness are most obnoxious to the foulest temptations; but God is there, and that should be enough to us. The young man in the Proverbs was enticed, because it was in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, Prov. vii. 9, 10. Therefore such occasions should be avoided; or if we be cast upon them, let us be the more careful and watchful.

3. Of a mixed nature, when there is not an omission of the duty, but of the sincerity. This may be seen in prayer: Rom. viii. 27, 'He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit.' In covenanting with God: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me!' In our whole obedience: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' We should consider with what heart we come into God's presence.

*Use 2. Exhortation, to press you to three duties—*

1. Take more care to get your sins pardoned than hidden: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that hideth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.' We seek to hide our sins from the world, from ourselves, and from God.

2. Study more to approve yourselves to God than to be concealed from men. Godly simplicity and sincerity will be our comfort: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world;' Rom. ii. 29, 'He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

3. Humble yourselves, not only for open, but secret sins: Ps. xix. 12, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Hezekiah 'humbled himself for the pride of his heart,' 2 Chron. xxxii. 26; David for unworthy thoughts of providence. Secret filthiness is odious to God.

*Helps. 1. A due sense of God's attributes; as—*

[1.] His omniscience: Ps. cxxxix. 2, 'He knoweth our thoughts afar off.' The perfection of his nature sheweth it. If he did not know all



things, he were not God ; something would be done in the world exempted from his providence. But it is not so : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'The Lord searcheth all hearts.'

[2.] His omnipresence. God is in all things, and through all things, and above all things : Eph. iv. 6, 'Who is above all, and through all, and in you all ;' Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.'

[3.] He is our judge. How shall God judge what he knoweth not?

2. The various ways he hath to discover secret sins.

[1.] The ministry of angels : Eccles. v. 6, 'Neither say thou before the angel, It was an error ;' 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things ;' 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.'

[2.] Sharp afflictions : Gen. xlii. 21, 'And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother ;' 1 Kings viii. 47, 'If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned.'

[3.] Breaking out of sin : Ps. xxxvi. 2, 'Till his iniquity be found hateful ;' 2 Tim. iii. 9, 'Their folly shall be manifest unto all men.'

[4.] Sometimes terrors of conscience : Mat. xxvii. 4, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood.' We vomit up our own shame.

## SERMON XV.

*But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light ; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.—EPH. v. 13.*

IN this verse the apostle opposeth the light of christianity to those deeds of darkness which were committed among the heathen. *Ἀντικείμενα παραλληλούμενα μάλιστα φαίνονται*—Opposites do illustrate one another. How secretly soever the things were done by them, yet the light that shineth from the word of God and the lives of christians doth condemn them, and dart conviction into the consciences of them that commit them, and also discover to others that God's people are in a better way. Christianity discovereth heathen practices not only to be mean and low, but filthy and base ; as light is the direct means to discover what the darkness hath hid : 'But all things that are reprov'd,' &c.

In the text we have—

1. An assertion, 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.'

2. The proof of it, 'For whatsoever doth make manifest is light.'

1. An assertion or proposition, where two things are to be considered—

[1.] Something supposed ; that the doctrine of christianity is the

true light or test by which things are to be judged. The way of heathenism being compared with it, sheweth this is light: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' So Prov. vi. 23, 'For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life;' Prov. xv. 31, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.' All these places show that God's word is the true light. Now God's word may be considered either as known and believed, or as obeyed and practised; consider it either way, it is still light. As known and believed, it is a light to direct our own way and steps, our general choice or particular actions; as obeyed and practised, it doth direct others, as it shineth forth from us to them; as God's word is a light, so holiness is the shining forth of this light.

[2.] That which is asserted is, that all things which are reprov'd and disallow'd are made manifest by the light; *verum est index sui et obliqui*. The light discovereth itself, and all things that differ from it; that which discovereth truth doth also discover error and falsehood; that which manifests what is right doth also manifest what is wrong. A holy doctrine doth discover truth and error, and a holy life doth discover good and evil, right and wrong. The word is a directive light to show us our duty, and a corrective and convincible light to awaken a due sense of sin. There is a twofold property of light; it may be considered either as *lux exhilarans*, as comfortable: Eccles. xi. 7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing is it for the eyes to behold the sun;' or as *lux redarguens*, as a reprov'g light. So the gospel hath not only a refreshing light to comfort penitent believers, but a reprov'g and discovering light to awaken the secure and careless: John iii. 20, 'He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The light of the gospel cheereth as it discovereth the grace of God, or reproveth as it discovereth the sins of the world.

2. The proof is taken from the common nature of all light, natural and sensible, or spiritual and intellectual: 'Whatever doth make manifest is light.' Natural light maketh manifest things proper to it; so doth spiritual light things that belong to its sphere, things morally good or evil.

*Doct.* That the light of christianity, shining forth in the word of God and the lives and actions of christians, is a great means of reprov'g and convincing the world.

In this point—

1. I suppose that christians have a heavenly light communicated to them; for the apostle speaketh to such as 'were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord,' ver. 8; and elsewhere Christ's disciples are said to be 'the light of the world;' Mat. v. 14, 'Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.' The disciples then spoken to are not considered under the notion of apostles and ministers; for the disciples Christ speaketh unto are the same to whom other parts of the sermon are directed and referred, and they contain general duties, which are the common concernment of all christians; and as yet none of Christ's disciples were invested with a peculiar office or ministry; afterwards some of them were empowered



and sent abroad with a special commission to preach. Therefore all christians are said to be 'the salt of the earth,' and 'the light of the world;' not only 'light in the Lord,' but 'the light of the world.' Jesus Christ is originally so: John viii. 12, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.' But ministerially and subserviently all christians are so. Light is to shine to others, not to itself. A christian hath not his knowledge for himself alone, nor his grace for himself only; he is to reprove, and direct, and guide others in the way of life: Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' The stars are the shining part of the heavens, so they are the luminous part of the world, both for brightness of knowledge and purity of conversation. There is a night of ignorance and sin upon others, but they are to guide and direct others into the way of life by their wisdom and holiness: 1 Thes. v. 5, 'Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness;' that is, such to whom God hath granted the means of knowledge and sanctification, and made them effectual to these ends, that they may be both illuminated and sanctified.

2. I suppose that they are true to their profession, that they walk as children of the light, that they behave themselves as a people into whose hearts the gospel, which is the true light, hath shined; for otherwise there are not such perverters of the world as false christians, who, professing christianity, live wickedly, or no better than other men; these rob Christ of his glory, they are 'worse than infidels,' 1 Tim. v. 8, while they profess the faith, and yet contradict the ends of it. Christ came not only to redeem the world, but to renew the world; but they debauch it by their sensual lives, even they, though they profess to be entered into the renewed estate. They usurp the name of christians, to the apparent disgrace of Christ, and making void his office. And when they should propagate the faith, by their ill way of living they confute it; and instead of confirming the weak, offend the strong; and besides that self-condemnation they bring upon themselves, they harden the world, and so betray the religion they do profess. Christ is not answerable for these, for they are his enemies, though seeming friends, while they live contrary to his laws.

3. That this light shineth forth both in their words and deeds. Both are of great use to convince the world, both the doctrine which they profess, and their holy conversations, and both must go together. So it was with Christ: John vii. 7, 'The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.' Christ's testimony was both by life and doctrine. And of Noah it is said, Heb. xi. 7, 'He condemned the world.' He was a preacher of righteousness, and he prepared an ark at the command of God, with vast expense and charge; he exhorted them to repent, and his preparing an ark was a real warning to the impenitent world that a flood was coming. So all christians shine as lights, holding forth the word of life both in profession and practice: Phil. ii. 15, 16, 'Among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' Either of them are an accommodate or proper means to convince the world.

[1.] The doctrine which they profess, hold fast, and adhere to. There is a light in God's word which doth not only show the right way to everlasting life and true happiness, but disproves any contrary course. To come to our journey's end we need a way, and light to see it and find it out. Our end is eternal life, and the way is stated in the gospel, without which direction we soon wander and lose ourselves in a maze of perplexities, not knowing whither we go, 'putting darkness for light, and light for darkness,' Isa. v. 20. But it is not direction, but conviction we are now upon. This light is mighty, forcible and powerful: Heb. iv. 12, 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' The word of God is, like himself, living and active, piercing into the depths and secrets of men. The priest in dissecting the sacrifices is not more accurate in separating and observing those things which are secret and closely joined together, than it is in discovering the thoughts and imaginations and most cunning contrivances of the heart. If any be obnoxious to the sentence of this word, it findeth them out, and discovereth their hypocrisy. The priest's sharp knife cannot enter so far into the secret part of the sacrifice as this word will enter into the secrets of the heart. They searched diligently if there were any blemish in the sacrifice. Heathens have felt this virtue: Acts xxiv. 25, 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' The prisoner maketh his judge to tremble, and the judge was an infidel, none of the tenderest-hearted; the evidence of his reasoning he was not able to resist. He came out of curiosity to hear Paul, his conscience boggles within him, and he is in an agony. Yea, natural men have such a sense of this shining and piercing light which is in the word, that they fear it before they feel it: John iii. 20, 'They will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.' It is in itself a discovering light, but evil-doers hate it, lest it should convince and discover them to themselves, and therefore stand aloof from it, and shun all means of knowing themselves, which sheweth a secret jealousy of this searching power which is in the word.

[2.] Holiness of life. Not only is the light of God's word considered here, but the holy life of the christian, which is also an awful and convincing thing, because it hath light in it, and shines to us. It is not words prevail so much as deeds. Light hath its power as it is held forth in our words, but much more as it shineth in our lives for the illumination and conviction of the world: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The most convincing splendour is in the works of christians; when they do not only speak, but do great things, then the world seeth and acknowledgeth that you have a spirit and a wisdom that they have not: Mark vi. 20, 'For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.'

4. This then is that which we are to make conscience of, that our light may be a reprov'g light to the wicked and carnal world; and that for these reasons—(1.) Because of our many and great



obligations; (2.) Because of the many benefits which come thereby.

First, Because of our great obligations, both to God and man.

[1.] Our obligations to God, whose creatures we are, and whose glory we are bound to promote. But here I shall not consider you as men, but as renewed men; and I will prove—

(1.) That God is glorified when the light of religion shineth forth in a holy conversation and godliness. God the Father is glorified, for holiness and goodness is the image and resplendency of God; he is discovered to the world to be what he is, a holy and good God. As we are not to betray the honour of God wherewith we are intrusted, so we are to do great things for him; and a greater we cannot do than aright to represent him to the world, and to keep up his remembrance in the hearts of men, that from us and by us they may know what a God he is; for we glorify God, not by adding to him, but representing what he is: 1 Peter i. 15, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' The world is greatly ignorant of causes, and therefore looketh much to effects; they observe what the people of God are, and thereby judge of God himself. Therefore it concerneth us greatly that we do not leaven men with ill thoughts of God; the more pure and holy we are, the more do we beget this thought in the minds of others, What a holy God do they serve! 1 John i. 5, 6, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' God is perfect purity; if we favour ourselves in any degree of licentiousness and impiety, we bespatter God with our lies, and put a great dishonour upon him in the eyes of the world: 'I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen,' Ezek. xx. 9. But if we walk in purity and holiness, we show that we have communion with God, who is all pure and holy, and so beget a good character of him in the minds of men; for by this means the light we have received from him shineth forth to others. Christ is glorified as the head of the renewed estate, by whose laws we live, and whose people we are. We show to the world what is the proper influence of his doctrine: 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, manifested by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.' Those that hold forth his doctrine in word or deed are said to glorify him; for this account he giveth of his disciples to his Father, John xvii. 10, 'I am glorified in them,' that is, by their faith and doctrine. God is glorified in deed (and this is that we are upon) when the doctrine of the gospel is imprinted on their hearts, and shineth forth in their lives; it sendeth us with letters of recommendation to the world. You may know his mind, and what his gospel is, by what is stamped upon your hearts; and by the fashioning and moulding your lives you declare plainly to others what a holy doctrine Christ is the author of. So the Spirit is glorified as his operations are perfected in us: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' The Spirit is glorified as a sanctifier and as a comforter. As a sanctifier he mastereth those

fleshly lusts by which the rest of the world are captivated ; and as a comforter he supporteth us in the greatest trials and afflictions. So that all the persons in the Trinity receive due honour from us. We add nothing to God, but we are to tell the world what he is.

(2.) I will prove that this was God's end in enlightening us, and calling us with a holy calling : 1 Peter ii. 9, ' But ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' We should illustrate and make his glory more conspicuous, who hath wrought such a gracious and powerful change in us. First, we wonder at the light ourselves, and then cause others to wonder at it. That which is God's end in bestowing all these privileges should be our great end and the business of our lives, namely, to show forth his perfections in the world. Our being called out of darkness into light is a favour, an honour, and a trust. It is a favour, considering our wretched estate ; before we were in darkness, and saw no light, neither knew our misery nor remedy. It is an honour, considering the grace and happiness we are called unto, to be sons of God, and heirs of glory, translated to a state of light, life, and liberty. And it is a trust, for this light is a talent that must be improved for God ; every one is to be accountable for what he hath received. Being made objects of his special grace, we are bound also to be eminent instruments of his glory in the world, and therefore not suffer this work to die upon our hands.

[2.] Our obligations to men ; there is a debt of duty which we owe to them. Surely it becometh every one that is graced and favoured by God to be a singular benefactor to the world, and being himself drawn into the light, he should promote the kingdom of light, life, and love to others : Luke xxii. 32, ' And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Besides, as creatures which are of a bastard production never procreate and bring forth after their kind, so mongrel christians mind not this work. But true grace filleth us with compassion and love to souls ; and them that are possessed with it, as fire turneth all about it into fire, so they endeavour to make others like themselves ; a good man is a common good. Certainly it is every man's duty in some considerable degree to do good to the world, and to be mutually and signally active for the true and real interest thereof. Now the more we seek to draw them out of that evil way and state they are in, the more do we show our zeal for the public good ; and the more corrupt the world is, the more should it stir up our pity, and the more intent should we be, upon all occasions, to represent the evil of their ways by a contrary conversation. Nothing but the light of holiness will invite them to regard religion, and embrace its ways, and submit to its power ; when it is commended in the sight of men, not only by words, but by deeds, it is set forth with greater advantage. If we honour our religion in words only, we are but as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. But the light that shines forth in deeds pierceth the heart and wounds the conscience to the quick, and the better may we expect to reclaim them from the way of perdition wherein they walk.

Secondly, The benefits that come thereby.

[1.] If it rests only in conviction, it is a great safety to religion, a



blessing Christ prayed for : John xvii. 21, 'That the world may believe that thou hast sent me;' and ver. 23, 'That the world may know that thou hast sent me.' The bare conviction of the world is a great blessing: John xvi. 8, 'And when he is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' It is promised the Spirit shall convince the world; not convert, but convince; and not only the unregenerated and unconverted world, but the reprobate lost world, who finally persist in their impenitency and disobedience. It conduceth much to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. As, for instance, is it not a mighty advantage that the careless and serious read the same bible, own the same baptism, and have the same creed, though they do not both attain salvation by it? Many speak highly of God that do not own him and choose him for their God: Dan. ii. 47, as the great king Nebuchadnezzar answered Daniel, 'Of a truth it is, that your God is a God, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret;' Acts v. 13, 'And of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them.' Some have an honourable esteem of the people of God. Besides, it cleareth God's process at the last day: Mat. xxii. 12, 'How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was speechless.' He came in thither though he had not a wedding-garment. Again, their conviction conduceth to other men's conversion. As the Samaritans believed when their great leader, 'to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest,' Acts viii. 10, professed the faith and was baptized, ver. 13, though he still remained 'in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' ver. 23. It is no small benefit that christianity hath gotten such esteem as to be made the public profession of nations. It is for the safety of the church. These convictions, though they do not change their enemies' hearts, yet they break their fierceness, that they are not such bitter enemies. Pliny, moved by the piety of christians, obtained a mitigation of persecution. Hatred is restrained by fear. A carnal christian hateth a godly man, and feareth him. Once more, conviction may bring on profession and a temporary faith, and so the church hath benefit by their gifts or by their protection. If men of power, they serve as a hedge of thorns about a garden of roses; if men of parts, they may be of use to defend the common christianity, and may serve, as the Gibeonites, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; or as they that built Noah's ark, who perished themselves in the flood: as a living tree may be supported by a dead post. The church hath great benefit by carnal men's gifts.

[2.] This conviction and disproof of their practices often tendeth to and endeth in conversion: 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, 'But if all prophesy, and there cometh in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' Thus may you probably work upon their hearts. They may come scorers and go away worshippers, proclaiming that God is really among you; and this by the word preached and the scripture interpreted. So also by the light of the word breaking out in your actions; when once they come to a sight of their sins, they may be the better induced to leave and forsake them.

This light pierceth also into the conscience. They see their former way of living is so vile and abhorred, and those noble and holy principles you live by are to be embraced: 1 Peter iii. 1, 'That if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;' that is, they may be induced to receive the gospel. The ministry of the word is usually the ordinary and principal means of conversion to God; yet sometimes he blesseth the conversations of his people; without this the best discourses may harden men in their prejudices, rather than reclaim them from their sinful ways. Carnal men do accurately pry into the secret practice of those that are religious, that they may find occasion to shake off the awe of truth; therefore we should be the more circumspect. They are called our observers: Ps. xxvii. 11, 'Lead me in the way of truth, because of mine enemies;' in the Hebrew, 'those that observe me.' God may make use of this contrary to their intention, that their very observers may be a means of much good to their souls.

[3.] Thereby your profession is justified and vindicated. There lie many prejudices in the heart of man against the gospel; these are better confuted by a real than a verbal apology, by showing the true and genuine force of religion, and what power it hath to change the heart and life: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' The world is apt to represent strict christians as a pack of dissemblers, and their religion as a peevish obstinacy or fond superstition. Now your miscarriages justify them in those misapprehensions; but a holy conversation stoppeth their mouths, and silenceth all their slanders. So the 15th verse, 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' A holy christian carriage doth bind up their mouths, when never so much enraged, as they muzzle up the mouths of wild beasts. Now then it lieth upon your choice, whether you will convince the world or justify the world; as Israel is said to justify Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 52. If you by your lives declare that you have worse, or no better principles than the carnal world, you justify them; but if you live at another rate, upon higher principles and for nobler ends, you convince the world and please God.

*Use 1. Information.* It informeth us of divers truths.

1. That though by the light of nature we have some sense of the turpitude of sin, yet we have not a perfect knowledge of it; the light of christianity giveth us that. Some sense they had, some knowledge of sin, and the shame that was in it, therefore they did run into secret with it; yet he speaketh here of a further discovery and manifestation of it by the light that is by the gospel: 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.' Many things, through the benefit of the light of nature, are written by the philosophers concerning virtues and vices, yet there is infinitely much more manifested in the word of God than in all their writings; so that we need a divine revelation even in moral duties.

[1.] Because our duty is not so clearly stated by man's reason as by God's authority. When it is found out by nature, it is left more to the



uncertainty of dispute. Bare nature is a hard book to study in, and the lessons of it not easily found out. While the wise men of the world were debating, practical godliness died on their hands, and men strove to be witty rather than to be good.

[2.] It is so coldly delivered, and not with that life and power as appeareth in this higher light of God's word. And that is the reason why natural light hath been so unsuccessful in the world for the reclaiming and reducing of mankind. A cold doctrine, that hath little evidence by real holiness, will not cure a dark diseased mind and heart. Moonlight hath no vital heat in it, therefore nothing groweth by it, *Lunæ radiis non maturescit botrus*.

[3.] Because it is so defective.

(1.) Nature discovereth only some gross sins: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show *ἔργον νόμου*, the work of the law written in their hearts,' &c. Heathens only condemned vices that appeared in external actions, as if virtue were not to regulate the purposes and intentions of the heart as well as the works of external deportment; whereas outward actions are good and bad so far as they take their tincture from the heart. If some of them have thought the will and purpose to do evil faulty and culpable, they are few, and have confined it only to settled purposes and deliberate counsels, and so not touched our corruption to the quick; and this is but one of a thousand, and that by chance; so that nature doth but twinkle here, not break forth with a full and powerful light.

(2.) The light of nature reacheth mostly to the lower hemisphere of duties, those of the second table; there it is most pregnant; it cannot lead us higher, and conduct us to God and heaven. When they sat abroad upon religion, what a goodly chimera was hatched! Rom. i. 21, 22, 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.'

(3.) In second-table duties it is defective; in humility and obedience.

(1st.) As to humility, we find little of that principle among them. Nature loveth to pride itself in its own plumes. Self-love is the principal pride in the soul, and vainglory the end of their religion; to excel others was all their aim.

(2d.) As to obedience to magistrates and superiors, which can never be so firmly bound upon us as by the bond of conscience; not by the fear of wrath and vengeance, not by the love of civil quiet and public good. They obey best that obey not for fear of wrath, but for conscience' sake: Rom. xiii. 5, 'Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake.'

2. It informeth us that some general sense of the shamefulness of sin will not break the power and force of it. The heathens in some measure knew what was sin, and that it was a shameful thing, not of any great use to them; they committed it still, though in secret; but the light of christianity doth so reprove it as to cause us to hate it; it doth or may give us such an awakening sight and sense of it as to show what an odious thing it is. By the light of christianity we see it in its proper colours.

[1.] The nature and malignity and evil of sin, what it is, not a natural disorder, but a breach of the law; that it is *ἀνομία*, 1 John iii. 4, 'A transgression of the law,' written by the finger of God on man's heart.

[2.] The rise and beginning of it, together with the manner of its propagation: Rom. v. 12, 'Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Whence this apostasy of mankind cometh, that it is the work of the devil that Christ came to destroy: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' without knowing which, the justice of God's providence, and the holiness of his nature can never well be understood.

[3.] The several kinds and branches and degrees of sin: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;' with its aggravations, whereby it cometh to be exceeding sinful to us, which giveth a more intimate sense of it: Rom. vii. 9, *ἐλθούσης ἐντολῆς*, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' ver. 13, 'That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.'

[4.] The effects and consequences of it. Loss of God's favour: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' It interrupted that near and intimate communion we had with God; it made us abominable in his sight, not fit to appear before him with comfort. And eternal wrath: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

[5.] Its remedy and cure: Rom. viii. 3, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' This work of the devil was only to be destroyed by the Son of God. We cannot wash away the filthiness, nor expiate the guilt of it, by any sacrifice and laver that we can use; nothing else can free us from the wrath of God but the blood of his Son, nor cleanse our souls from this venom and poison which is gotten, not only into the will and affections, but into the very mind and heart, but the light and power of his Spirit.

3. It informeth us why Satan and his wicked instruments do so hate the light, and oppose and hinder its propagation in the world, either by the preaching of the word or the lives of christians, because the works of darkness are manifested by the light. The devil maligneth the success of the gospel: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' The gospel layeth open the policies and impostures of Satan, by which he beguileth and circumvents souls. It is an enemy to the devil's kingdom: Eph. vi. 12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' So for his instruments: 1 John iii. 12, 'Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his



brother's righteous;' 1 Peter iv. 3, 4, 'For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' A spiritual slumber is fallen on the carnal world, and they are loath to be disturbed; as Jonah, when the sun groweth hot, and beateth upon his head, falleth a chafing. The devil is a prince of darkness, and delighteth in darkness, and envieth to the world this blessed light and the benefit of it.

*Use 2.* Is exhortation, to persuade us to get light. It is a shame to be ignorant of our necessary duty. If a man be asked whether he can paint or carve? he may answer without shame, I am ignorant; that skill is not necessary; but if he be ignorant how to love and please and serve God, then he is brutish, like the horse or mule, that hath no understanding.

## SERMON XVI.

*Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light.—EPH. v. 14.*

THE apostle confirmeth what he had said, that christianity is light, by a testimony. All that are converted by God, and brought into a state of light, the doctrine they profess is light, and they are to put to shame the deeds of darkness by the light that shineth from them into the consciences of others: 'Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' As if he had said, The drift of the word of God is to call us to a timely conversion, or to awaken us from the sleep and death of sin, that he may enlighten us with the light of the gospel, and we may walk accordingly, and so have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

In the words we have two things—(1.) A preface; (2.) The testimony produced.

1. The preface, 'Wherefore he saith.' Who saith? God in the scriptures. But where doth he say it, since we read not this sentence anywhere in so many formal and direct words?

*Ans. [1.]* It may be it was some sentence of Christ then in recent memory, as that, Acts xx. 35, 'And to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

[2.] It may be this is said to be the voice of God, because it is the drift of the whole scripture; for all tendeth to this sum, that those who are asleep, and dead in sin, be stirred up to repentance, and coming to Christ by faith, that he may give them light; that is, that they may be enlightened by his grace, and so fitted for eternal glory: Titus ii. 11–13, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath

appeared to all men,' ἐπεφάνη hath broken out like light upon us, 'teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

[3.] There are some scriptures which are like it; as Isa. ix. 2, 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.' This is spoken of the Messiah, who cometh to enlighten the world by the ministry of the gospel; as it is applied, Mat. iv. 16, 'The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.' Nearer yet, Isa. xxvi. 19, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.' But nearest of all, Isa. lx. 1, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;' which chapter speaketh of the glorious estate of the church under the Messiah, and therefore they are exhorted to rouse up themselves, and to mind and improve the grace offered; that is, those that live in these gospel times are in word and deed to hold forth this light and doctrine of Christ to the conversion of others.

2. In the testimony produced there are two things to be observed—(1.) A command; (2.) A promise.

[1.] A command, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.' In which words observe—(1.) The quality of the persons to whom the command is given; (2.) The nature of the command itself

(1.) The quality of the persons to whom the command is given. They are described by a double character, to be those that are asleep, and those that are dead in trespasses and sins. Sleep and death have a great affinity and resemblance one with another; natural sleep is an image of death, but spiritual sleep is a true spiritual death. In our natural sleep our faculties and their functions are suspended, but yet they remain entire; in spiritual sleep our faculties are corrupted and disabled for any office of life. Zanchy saith these words are spoken to two sorts of persons—to mere unbelievers, and to sinning believers. The last are compared to them that sleep, the other to them that are dead. Awakening is required from the one, and rising from the dead as to the other. But this is more argute than solid. Both expressions denote some persons: 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.' The one expression noteth their incapacity to help themselves, the other their security and carelessness; they do not trouble themselves about it.

(2.) The nature of the command, 'Awake,' and 'Arise from the dead.' The things commanded are two—that they should 'awake,' and 'arise from the dead; as in natural sleep men are first awakened, and then they rise and go about their business.

[2.] The promise, 'And Christ shall give thee light,' ἐπιφάνσει σοι; he shall shine upon thee. When the gospel was first set up, the light did shine about them, but not presently into their hearts: John i. 5, 'The light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. This light shineth about us in the tenders of gospel grace, but it shineth into our hearts when we are admitted into the privileges of it, and are made partakers of this heavenly benefit. In opposition to our



natural estate it should be (we would think), Christ shall give thee life, but it is, Give thee light. Christ converts us by shining into our hearts; we are enlightened by being baptized: Heb. x. 32, 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.'

From the whole observe this doctrine—

*Doct.* That the great intent of Christ in the gospel is to call people out of their woful estate by sin into the marvellous light of his salvation.

This is the great truth here represented; and to clear it up to you—

I. Observe how woful and dangerous the present case of carnal unregenerate men is. It is represented to us under the notions of spiritual sleep and spiritual death; which I shall speak of both generally and apart, and then conjunctly and together.

First, To speak of them generally and apart.

1. They are asleep in sin, whereas the regenerate are awakened: 1 Thes. v. 5, 6, 'Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.' Their sleep noteth their ignorance and security; they neither mind their duty nor their danger; never think of God's wrath approaching, nor prepare themselves to stand before him with comfort, but go on contentedly in their sinful estate, as if the merry world would always last. Sleeping is either total or partial.

[1.] Total, in the unregenerate, who are senseless and mindless of their condition, or regard nothing of their misery and happiness. Their reason and natural knowledge is, as it were, laid asleep, and useless to them. If men did improve common principles, and act as reasonable creatures, they could not so unreasonably allow themselves in such a course of sin and folly as they live in. Therefore our business is to awaken conscience, that they may show themselves men: Isa. xlv. 8, 'Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors!' O christians! is this a case to sleep in, when men are upon the brink of hell, and the wrath of God hangeth like a sharp sword over their heads, ready to drop down upon them every moment? If reason were not laid asleep, grace would sooner do its work.

[2.] Partial, in God's people: Cant. v. 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' There is in them a double principle—the flesh inclining to sleep, and the spirit inclining to wake. We read in the parable, Mat. xxv. 5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept;' that is, both the foolish and wise virgins. The wise have their slumbering fits. The doctrines of the gospel concerning God and Christ, heaven and hell, sin and holiness, have not always alike lively influence upon their hearts. By the gleams of worldly prosperity faith is fallen asleep, and ready to give place to sensuality, and they are governed more by the desires of the flesh than by the heavenly mind. The heart is kept strange to God and heaven, because it is altogether taken up with carnal vanities.

But the former is now under our consideration, the sleep of the carnal, not of the renewed. That sleep again is twofold—natural and judicial.

(1.) Natural, when they are careless of their souls, neglectful of heavenly things, live without God in the world. This is natural to us through the ignorance and injudiciousness of our minds : 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Eph. ii. 12, 'That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.'

(2.) There is a judicial hardness, when a spirit of deep sleep falleth upon them, and they are neither awakened by the ordinances nor providences of God : Rom. xi. 8, 'God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.' This noteth an extreme degree of security and stupidity, when God giveth men up to their wilful obstinacy, by withdrawing that light from them against which they have so often rebelled, and then they are, as it were, intoxicated by some soporiferous potion or medicine; do what we can, we cannot awaken them. All wicked men arrive not to this, but they are in the way to it. Here then is their misery upon the first account, they sleep in sin; and a great misery it is.

(1st.) Because their insensibility and security make their other sins more dangerous. If the devil can keep men asleep in their sins, he hath his ends upon them; he could not make such slaves and drudges of them to their base lusts if reason and conscience were but awake in them: 1 Cor. xv. 34, 'Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.' It is all the reason men should rouse up themselves out of that drowsy condition of sin wherein they are got so securely and contentedly, without disturbance or remorse.

(2d.) Though they sleep, their damnation sleepeth not: 2 Peter ii. 3, 'Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.' Punishment may be long suspended, yet it breaketh out at last, and surpriseth us ere we are aware. It is sad to sleep on still till we awake in flames. Death, and judgment, and eternity is at hand, and will you still live merrily and quietly, in a careless and unprepared estate, as if all were well?

(3d.) The sun is up, and shines into their windows: Rom. xiii. 11, 'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed;' 1 Thes. v. 7, 'For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.' To sleep in our sins when we live in the full sunshine of the gospel is more damnable: John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' Deeds of darkness do not become a time of light. Will you follow Satan by daylight, and run on with open eyes to everlasting destruction? Our sins are more excuseless and more shameless the more wilful. Every sin is double to what it was in the times of ignorance. Our security now cannot be maintained without atheism and great contempt of God, who so clearly discovereth his mind to us.

2. The next notion is spiritual death; for we are bidden to 'Arise



from the dead,' which sheweth this sleep is deadly: Eph. ii. 1, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;' John v. 25, 'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live.' We are spiritually dead till Christ help us. How are we dead? Two ways—(1.) Dead as we are destitute of spiritual life; (2.) Dead as we are destitute of the favour and peace of God.

[1.] Dead as we are destitute of spiritual life. To lessen our disease is to slight our cure, which the scripture seeketh to magnify everywhere. And therefore to be destitute of the Spirit of God is as the body when deprived of the soul. There is no principle in us to incline us to God, or to do anything that is spiritually good, yea, much to the contrary: Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' As there is no inclination and ability, so there is much averseness and enmity; and therefore we cannot quicken ourselves or convert ourselves. And this incapacity and disability is increased in us by the growth of perverse and carnal habits: 1 Tim. v. 6, 'But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Though alive as to the body, she is dead as to God and the heavenly life, and all the interests of it.

[2.] We are dead as we have lost the favour of God, and are obnoxious to his wrath. The law hath sentenced us to death, and our passing from death to life is not only put in opposition to corruption, but is opposite to condemnation: John v. 24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' And sins are called 'dead works,' as they render us liable to death, Heb. ix. 14. They merit everlasting punishment. Now this is our woful condition, we are destitute of life spiritual, and obnoxious to the wrath of God, and therefore we should not allowedly continue in this estate for a moment.

Secondly, Let us speak of these terms conjunctly; the one helpeth to explain the other. When we hear that man sleepeth in sin, possibly we might be apt to be conceited that man's heart is not so corrupt as it is, and are ready to say of it, as Christ did of the damsel whom he raised to life, Mat. ix. 24, 'She is not dead, but sleepeth.' Therefore we must take in the other expression to help it. We do not only sleep in sin, but are dead in trespasses and sins. So, on the other side, when we hear that we are in the state of the dead, we may misconceive of God's work in conversion, and press the rigour of the notion too far, as if he wrought upon us only as stocks and stones; therefore we must take in the other expression; we sleep in sins. Life natural is still left us; there is reason and conscience still to work upon, though we are wholly disabled from doing anything pleasing to God; that is to say—

1. We have reason. Thou art a man, and hast reason, and therefore art to be dealt with by way of exhortation. God influenceth all things according to their natural inclination, as he enlighteneth the world by the sun, burneth with fire, so he reasoneth with man. God acts necessarily with necessary causes, and freely with free causes. He doth not oppress the liberty of his creatures, but preserveth the nature and interest of his workmanship, and draweth men with the cords of a

man, Hosea xi. 4, propoundeth reasons which we must consider, and so betake ourselves to the heavenly life. He maketh use of the faculties we have, and sheweth us the misery of our lost estate, the possibility of salvation by Christ, sweetly inviting us to accept of his grace, that he may pardon our sins, sanctify and heal our natures, and lead us in a way of holiness to eternal life.

2. We have conscience (which is reason applying things to our case), and can judge of our actions morally considered with respect to reward and punishment, and accuse or excuse as the nature of the action deserveth: Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.'

3. That we have a natural self-love and desire of happiness: Ps. iv. 6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' We would not be miserable, nor hated of God, nor cast into eternal torments, but would rather have eternal bliss. How can we preach to you? What have we to work upon but this? So that though we are dead, so as to do nothing savingly and acceptably, yet we must remember that we are also asleep, ignorant, slight, careless, do not improve our natural reason, conscience, and desires of happiness to any saving purpose, and will not mind things. Both together giveth us a right apprehension of our woful condition by nature, that we are corrupt, and so are said to be dead; and senseless and secure, so we are said to be asleep, mindless of our danger and remedy.

II. The manner of our recovery out of this wretched estate.

1. In the general, it is by calling of us. God's words are here put in the form of a call or invitation, 'Awake, arise.' 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light;' 2 Thes. ii. 14, 'Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This calling is both outward and inward; outwardly by the gospel, and inwardly by the Spirit. The outward calling is necessary that we might have some visible sign of God's good-will towards us, and something from God himself to give us a right and warrant to lay claim to those excellent privileges by which he doth invite us to our duty, that we might not take this honour to ourselves, and seem to usurp and intrude upon the possession of those things which belong not to us: Heb. v. 4, 'And no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God.' None came to the wedding but those that were bidden, Mat. xxii., or went into the vineyard till they were hired, Mat. xx. It is necessary also to bring home his grace to us, and leave it upon our own choice: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent;' that if we refuse it, the fault may appear to be our own, and our destruction of ourselves. The inward calling by his Spirit is necessary also to make this grace effectual, otherwise we should remain dead and sleepy still: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto



life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.' God hath called us to glory and virtue, which we expound, to heaven and holiness. But the call remaineth ineffectual, there being so much opposition without and within our hearts, and slight and vain apprehensions of it. And the devil catcheth the good seed out of our minds as soon as we begin to be serious, Mat. xiii. 19; and we being enchanted with a sensual happiness, do so willingly yield to his motions, that all will come to nothing unless God interpose his divine power to change our hearts, and bring us to life and godliness.

2. More particularly, the order of this calling is set down in the text, in these two injunctions, 'Awake,' and 'Arise from the dead.' We are reduced and brought home to God two ways—either (1.) Preparatively and dispositively; or (2.) Formally and constitutively.

[1.] The preparative and dispositive way is intimated in that word 'Awake,' and teacheth us this great truth, that our first step to conversion is an awakening, or a serious consideration whence we are, whither we are a-going, or what shall become of us to all eternity. Wherever conversion to God is spoken of, somewhat of this is implied. Awakening grace goeth before converting grace: Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord.' First remember, and then turn; as if they had forgotten themselves all the while before, and had lived as in a dream, and utter neglect of those common principles which discovered a God; and do rule, or govern, and influence all the affairs of mankind. So Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Till we consider what we have done, and what we should do, there can be no expectation that we should correct our errors, and heartily return to a holy life, or to the obedience we owe to God. So it is said of the prodigal, Luke xv. 17, that 'he came to himself' before he thought of returning to his father. There are two parts of religion—to bring men and themselves together, and then to bring them and Christ together; the one is preparative to the other; first they come to themselves, and then they are in a hopeful way of being brought to Christ. So Ezek. xviii. 28, 'Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed.' First he considereth, and layeth his course of life to heart, and then turneth from it. As here in the text; awaking out of the sleep of sin maketh way for the introduction of the light of life: 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.' In the margin it is 'that they may awake,' *ἀνανήψωσιν*. The word *ἀνανήψειν* signifieth to awake or be sober again after drunkenness, as the scripture expresseth it concerning Nabal: 1 Sam. xxv. 37, 'It came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him all these things, that his heart died within him.' So of Noah: Gen. ix. 24, 'And Noah awoke from his wine.' And so if the fumes of lust were thoroughly dissipated and scattered, and men were come to themselves again, much good might be done upon them. I have done with this preparative way of recovery, when I have observed to you two things, for it consists of two branches—

(1.) An awakening sense and sight of our misery; such the apostle speaketh of Rom. vii. 9, 'When the commandment came, sin revived,

and I died.' This practical conviction maketh us see our lost estate, for we never value Christ as a saviour till we see our own necessity of him. A cold doctrinal knowledge of sin and misery maketh way but for a dogmatical opinionative faith; and the offer of grace is never seriously regarded by any that is not made sensible of his sad and miserable case by nature. Therefore this part of the awakening is necessary. As the physician is welcome to the sick, and ease to the burdened, and redemption to the captive, so is the promise to them that are apprehensive of the curse.

(2.) The next awakening concerneth our remedy, which we slight and neglect while we are drunk with worldly felicity: Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' We prize not Christ and his salvation till the Lord be pleased to open our hearts, as he did the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. Then we begin to consider what manner of salvation is offered to us, and how deeply we are concerned in it. And conscience begins to scourge us with such a question as that is, Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' And of what punishment shall we be thought worthy if we despise God's offer?

[2.] Formal and constitutive, 'Arise from the dead.' Our conversion is as the recalling of a dead man to life; and therefore called 'repentance from dead works,' Heb. vi. 1. And it is represented by the return of the prodigal, Luke xv. 32, 'For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again.' It is as wonderful a work and as considerable a blessing as if he had been raised from the dead. Things are said to be dead when they are useless as to the ends for which they serve or were created; so we are dead in trespasses and sins, useless to God, and averse from him; but when we renounce and forsake all our former ways, and devote ourselves to God, to live in his love, and do his will, then we are alive again. The other awakening is *gradus ad rem*, a preparative disposition; this is *gradus in re*, a plain passing from death to life. Man before the fall did enjoy spiritual life and communion with God, being his creature, and fitted for commerce with him, but we lost this life by our defection from God; therefore now our great business is to return to it again, by getting our hearts and lives changed. It beginneth in the new birth, when we are first quickened to this life: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;' Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' And the first act of it is our solemn dedication of ourselves to God: Rom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' And still it is carried on in holiness all our days: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' So that to rise from the dead is as much as to get your natures changed and healed, and to quit your former conversation, and the lusts that caused it, that for the future you may live unto God. This is that the returning sinner must mind, that the convictions may not die upon his heart till they produce some good effect, a settled purpose and resolution to live the holy and heavenly life.



III. The next thing is, what a blessed estate Christ calleth them into; he doth not only rescue them out of the power of darkness, but 'he will give them light.'

Many things are intended hereby.

1. By light is meant the lively light of the Spirit, or a clear affective knowledge both of our misery and remedy. Of our misery: Rev. iii. 18, 'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see;' that is, see our misery and wretched condition. Our remedy: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' He alludeth to the creation; as light was the first creature—'Let there be light, and there was light'—so it is in the new creation.

2. Light is put for God's favour, and the solid consolation which floweth from thence: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased;' Ps. lxxxix. 15, 'They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.' Naturally we were children of wrath even as others, had no true peace and solid comfort; now to live in the favour of God, whereas before we continually feared his wrath, is certainly a very great blessing.

3. It implieth eternal glory and happiness, to which we have a right now, and for which we are prepared and fitted by grace: Col. i. 12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

4. I shall answer some doubts; for may it not seem to be collected hence—

[1.] That it is in our power to obey the call of God, or to do those things which he hath required of us in the gospel, as to repent, believe, and walk in newness of life?

[2.] That we prevent him? for first we awake, and arise from the dead, before Christ giveth us light. So much the order of the words seems to imply, that man is first awakened, and risen, and then enlightened. This cannot be, for it is by the light of Christ that we are both awakened and raised.

To the first I answer—It is not so; it is *potentia Domini, non viribus mortui*, by the power of God alone, by which they are awakened and risen; it is not in their power, but their duty. And in these exhortations God sheweth not what we can do, but what we ought to do.

God exhorteth for these reasons—

(1.) To demand his right. Though we have lost our power, yet he must not lose his right. As a debt may be demanded from a prodigal creditor who hath wasted his substance, so may our duty be required of us, especially when it is demanded practically, to convince us of our impotency; that is, that upon trial we may acknowledge the debt, confess our impotency, and beg grace.

(2.) Because God by calling conveyeth his grace: 'For he calleth the things that are not as though they were,' Rom. iv. 17. His word is a creating word. He cried with a loud voice to the dead man that was ready to stink, John xi. 43, 'Lazarus, come forth;' so to the man with a withered hand, Mat. xii. 13, 'Stretch forth thine hand.'

That was the defect; he could not stretch forth his hand; but God often commandeth those things which he performeth by his own grace, and giveth us to do what he biddeth us to do; and by these exhortations and commands his Spirit worketh that effectually in us which he requieth of us.

(3.) Sinners without these exhortations would be careless, and go on contentedly in sin, and be mindless of these things; therefore it is good to rouse them up, to charge them with their duty, and speedily and earnestly to go about it, if they mean to be saved, that they may take care of this duty as well as they can, else all these rebukes aggravate their sin: Prov. i. 25, 'They set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.' To put it off when conscience boggleth is aggravated wickedness: Acts xxiv. 25, 'When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,' and would hear Paul at a more convenient season.

(4.) When the Lord hath begun with us, we must not remain dead, careless, and sleepy. What God commandeth we must set ourselves to obey; it is our work, though grace be from him. It is I that must be awakened; it is I must arise from the dead, and turn to God; it is I must believe and obey.

[3.] But it seemeth we prevent God.

(1.) This giving light is not an effect or consequent following after, either in order of nature or time, but a cause; for by and in these things God giveth us light, or bringeth us into this lightsome condition of christianity.

(2.) It may be understood not of God's converting or assisting grace, but his rewarding grace; that is, blessing, comfort, peace, and glory, or some further degree of knowledge and grace, whereby a christian may glorify his profession. But often in scripture the Spirit is promised to the penitent: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you;' Acts ii. 38, 'And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' To the believer: John vii. 38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' But none of this doth exclude his preventing grace, by which he worketh all our works in us.

## SERMON XVII.

*Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.—EPH. v. 14.*

USE. If this be the intent of Christ, it serveth for exhortation, to awaken sinners out of the sleep of sin, that they may rise from the dead, and obtain the light of life. Look every one to yourselves, for



the voice of God speaketh to every one particularly: 'Awake *thou* that sleepest, and rise *thou* from the dead.' A tender waking conscience is a great mercy, whereas a dead and stupid conscience is a heavy judgment; for then neither reason nor grace is of any use to us; we can neither do the functions of a man or a christian while we are asleep. Because every one will shift this off from himself, and think it concerneth not him, I shall show you how it concerneth both the regenerate and unregenerate, and how far both the one and the other may be said to be asleep in sin.

*First*, For those that are carnal, and live in a course and trade of sin, habitual customary sinners, there is no doubt but they are asleep, and dead in trespasses and sins; for—

1. Their great work lieth undone, which is entering into God's peace, and accepting the grace offered to them for the pardon of their sins, and healing their natures: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful.' And what is that one thing, but returning to God from whom we have fallen by our folly and sin, or seeking his renewing and reconciling grace? this is the main thing: Mat. vi. 33, 'But first seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' Phil. iii. 13, 'This one thing I do.' All men in their wits would mind this.

2. Their greatest concerns are forgotten by them, which is avoiding eternal death and obtaining eternal life: Prov. xv. 24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Our wisdom lieth in avoiding our greatest danger, and pursuing after our greatest happiness, and therefore to choose that sort of living which conduceth both to the one and the other. And by nature we are liable to eternal death, but the grace of the gospel provideth for us eternal happiness. The misery is beneath, the happiness is above; and salvation and damnation are no trifles. Now he that only mindeth things below, and neglecteth things above, is plainly asleep, and doth not act as a reasonable creature.

3. The light and direction which God giveth is of no use to him. There is a twofold light that shineth—the light of reason, and the light of religion.

[1.] The light of reason is of no use to a man that sleepeth. Reason will fear and hope, but it doth not stir them. Reason discerneth a difference between good and evil, and our wills were given us to refuse the one, and choose the other; and fears and hopes do awake us to this aversation or pursuit. But alas! to one whose conscience is benumbed, all is lost. Seeing better, they pursue that which is worse; they approve of things that are more excellent; but this law knowledge or natural knowledge is but a form: Rom. ii. 18, 20, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law. Which hath a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' It is but *μόρφωσις τῆς γνώσεως ἐν τῷ νόμῳ*; it is little stirring to make us mindful of our duty, and less effectual to make us perform it. The greatest things do not affect us when we do not think of them.

[2.] The light of religion or christianity, which is but a form too to them that are asleep: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but

denying the power thereof.' To sleep under the threatenings of God and the dreadful curses of his law, with so many wounds in our consciences and ulcers in our souls as the word of God discovereth in us, this is a deep sleep indeed. Our duty and danger is discovered to us at a higher rate in religion than was evident in the light of nature, and in a more powerful and affective way; but these hear, and see, and know all things as men asleep, as if it concerned them not at all. Well, then, we should earnestly seek to rouse them up.

First, 'Awake thou that sleepest.' Consider these motives—

1. Doth it become any to sleep in your case, while you know not God to be a friend or an enemy? yea, when you have so much reason to think that he is an enemy to you, for you are enemies to him by your minds in evil works: Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works.' The proverb saith, 'A man that hath an enemy must not sleep;' we take it for a maxim. And have not you made God your enemy when you break his laws, and grieve his Spirit, and dishonour his name? Go and be reconciled quickly. Is the guilt of sin a slight matter, or damnation a thing to be played with?

2. You sleep in that ship that is swiftly carried to eternity, and are just upon the entrance into another world: Mark xiii. 36, 'Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.' Oh, if Christ should come when you least expect him, and find you in a posture incapable of mercy from him, unqualified to receive benefit by his coming, how great will your confusion be! and you cannot present his time to him, and say, Stay till I am prepared; that may be long ere you are so.

3. You have slept out too much precious time already: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us.' Have we not kept God out of his right too long, and delayed our own happiness, and left an eternal interest upon too great uncertainties and hazards? and will you do so still?

4. Thou hast been long and often called upon. If God had not sought to awaken you, you had the better excuse: Prov. vi. 9, 10, 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of sleep? yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.' Sleepy sinners are not presently awakened; we must continue calling to them. God hath not taken the first repulse, but still continueth calling thee by his word and providence. Men should be ashamed to lie snoring upon their beds when their master or father or prince calleth them. God calleth you by his word; conscience is a little stirred, but you fall asleep again. God seeketh to awaken you by smart providences; then you rouse up yourselves a little, but presently the love of sin prevaieth, and you take your rest again. You would fain sleep a little longer in sin, are loath to renounce your bewitching lusts and betake yourselves to a heavenly life.

5. Now is your time and season: Prov. x. 5, 'He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.' To lose time is sad, but to lose the season worst of all, and a season that bringeth profit as well as labour, as harvest doth. Usually the time of grace is between eighteen and eight-and-twenty; this is matter of observation. We cannot exclude other seasons, for



Christ may effectually call at the eleventh hour. We cannot say, The day of grace is past; but while you are fresh and in your flower, it is good to set your hearts to religion. Though the day of gospel grace hath no shorter end than the end of our life upon earth, God knoweth how long that life or the means of grace may be continued, either to a nation or person; it is quicklier past to some than others. Besides, there are certain times when God actually moveth the hearts of the impenitent towards conversion more than formerly he did. In short, there is the Father's season, the day of his patience, and that is as long as life, while his long-suffering waiteth: 1 Peter iii. 20, 'When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' And we are sure of no more; the present time is the best and only certain time: Heb. iii. 7, 'To-day, if you will hear his voice.' And there is God the Son's time, while the offers of grace continue; and we must not sin away and shorten this time: Luke xix. 42, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes;' 2 Cor. vi. 2, 'I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' And there is God the Holy Spirit's time, when his motions are stronger and opportunities fairer for conversion than ever afterwards: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.' God may withhold the motions of his Spirit, and leave us to the hardness of our hearts; therefore we are to open when he knocketh, to put in for cure when he stirreth the waters, to let loose the sails when the wind bloweth.

6. Others care for their souls, and are hard at work for God; their diligence should awaken us: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews;' Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' As the lazy and drowsy are stirred up by the early rising and constant labour of their neighbours. Why should not our souls be as precious to us as theirs to them? The same common necessity lieth upon us. Now shall not their zeal provoke us? They are flesh and blood as we are, and have not divested themselves of the interest and affections of the animal life no more than we; only they govern them, and overrule them to a better end. Now shall not their zeal provoke us?

7. The devil is awake, and will you sleep? 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' He is rocking your cradles, stilling your consciences by diversions or vain delights, prejudicing us against a holy ministry that would do us good, instilling into us by his instruments false and base opinions against holiness and strictness of life, to lull us asleep in security. Now, should we that know our danger take up every false allegation against our duty?

8. If nature were well awake, it would disprove your courses as much as religion. Now when duty is unquestionable, and nature doth even

show to us that it is a shame to indulge such lusts and practices, that should much move us ; otherwise we neither behave ourselves as men or christians. The thing should be doubly dear to us ; that is, dear to us, 'both in the flesh and in the Lord,' Philem. 16. When nature and grace concur, either to commend or condemn a way, we sin greatly if we regard not these motions.

Secondly, 'Arise from the dead ;' that is, be converted to God ; for the voice of Christ doth not only conduce to awaken us, but to raise us from the dead : John v. 25, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live.' Look about you, then ; entertain serious thoughts of getting out of a state of sin into a state of grace.

Take two motives to quicken you to this—

1. Better never be awakened if still we continue in our sins, for this aggravateth them : John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' When it prevaileth for conviction only, and not for conversion, when you know a better condition, and do not embrace it, this is not only shameful, but wilful sluggishness.

2. Better never rise in the last day if we be not raised from the death of sin. It would be a kind of good news to the wicked if there were an end of them in the grave. No ; all must rise again : John v. 28, 29, 'Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. Herein they are worse than the brutes, death puts an end to their pains and pleasures at once ; but when a wicked man dieth, he goeth to receive his everlasting doom and sentence, which shall openly be pronounced at the last day. Oh, then, 'arise from the dead.' There are two pleas against this exhortation ; some say, It is too soon ; others, It is too late.

[1.] Do not say, It is too soon ; for we can never soon enough get out of so great a danger. The case is more difficult every day ; and when you are awakened, and smother your convictions, that bringeth on penal hardness : Heb. iii. 7, 8, 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' While it is called to-day, before God's day be over, and the heat and force of the impulse be lost. The present time is the only time, and we are not sure the day of salvation may be longer, because death may cut us off. Sin is a hardening thing ; and the longer we sin, the more it hardeneth.

[2.] Do not say, It is too late ; for the work is yet possible, as short as your time is like to be in the world ; and it will be your fault if it be not done. The covenant of grace promiseth pardon to every penitent believer, whenever they truly turn to God, without excepting any hour or person in the world. God doth yet freely offer you mercy ; and if you will not refuse him, the design of love shall not break on his part. Repentance, and cries, and tears will be too late in the other world, but never here. God is able. Do not say, as Martha, John xi. 39, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh.' God is able to raise dead souls, as he did Lazarus out of the grave. Indeed, if you think sin is best for you, and you will not hear of changing your course, then for the present christianity speaketh no good to you.



*Secondly*, I must apply myself to the regenerate and renewed by grace, and so show you how they may sleep in sin, and therefore should awake to righteousness.

1. It may be incident to God's people; for the foolish and wise virgins both slumbered and slept: Mat. xxv. 5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.'

*Reasons.*

[1.] There is a diversity of principles within us, the flesh inclining to sleep, and the spirit inclining to wake: Cant. v. 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh;' Mat. xxvi. 41, 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The degrees of grace which the best attain unto in this life are mixed with imperfections; the commanding faculties do but imperfectly direct, and the inferior faculties do but imperfectly obey; the understanding is but a blind guide, and the will is but imperfectly rectified by grace.

[2.] There are variety of natural occurrences working upon the diversity of principles within us; sometimes we are in a prosperous estate, sometimes in deep trouble, and both may cause deadness and drowsiness in us. Deep troubles may make us 'weary of well-doing,' 2 Thes. iii. 13; Heb. xii. 3, 'Lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.' So in times of wealth, peace, and honour, these may breed in us security and neglect of God: Prov. i. 32, 'For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.' Ease destroyeth the fool. When Delilah spreads her lap for us, and the delights of the world open their bosom to us, we had need to look to ourselves. David enjoying peace and rest fell into those foul sins of adultery and murder, 2 Sam. xi. 1. He slew Uriah, his friend, who in adversity spared Saul, his enemy; his heart smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, but without remorse he plotteth secretly to destroy his faithful servant.

[3.] Conversing with spiritual sluggards, who count it a high piece of wisdom not to be too forward in religion. Company and example hath a mighty force upon us, and doth secretly taint our hearts: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Mortified, warm, heavenly, and self-denying christians do exceedingly quicken us: Heb. x. 24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.' But carnal company is a deadening thing; a man had need shake them off if he will keep religion alive: Ps. cxix. 115, 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God.' Our dulness is such, that we need most powerful helps.

[4.] Another cause is dead worship. *Missa non mordet*—The mass bites not. Spiritual duties are compared to new wine, Mat. ix. 17, but pharisaical fasts to old dead wine. A perfunctory sort of worship never keepeth us awake; powerful preaching is compared to goads to prick us: Eccles. xii. 11, 'The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.'

[5.] Slumber is another cause of sleeping: Mat. xxv. 5, 'They all slumbered and slept;' first they slumbered, then they slept. No man becometh stark naught at the first step. Give way to a remiss will, and it increaseth on you; one degree of carelessness breedeth another;

suppose one act of careless praying, or slight hearing, which draweth on other acts.

[6.] Not keeping graces in a lively and constant exercise : Prov. xix. 15, 'Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.' The way to be fervent in duties is to be frequent in them. Wells are the sweeter for draining ; exercise keepeth us in life and heart.

[7.] Grieving the Spirit causeth him to suspend his quickening influences, and then the soul is soon in a dead and drowsy estate : Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Conscience is more stupid, and the heart more stiff after some notable disobedience to the Spirit's motions. David and Jonah are instances of this.

[8.] Immoderate liberty in worldly things, either in worldly cares or the delights of the flesh : Luke xxi. 31, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' So Ps. cxix. 37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.'

2. Wherein the evil of this consists? There is some defect in the vital graces. Faith is dead : James ii. 20, 'Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?' Love is cold : Mat. xxiv. 12, 'Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.' And hope is slight, whereas it should be a lively hope : 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Faith is dead when there is a form of knowledge rather than a lively assent to the truths of godliness, and only a dead opinionative belief. Love is cold when it doth not overrule carnal self-love, and hath not that force and constraint upon the soul that it should have : 2 Cor. v. 14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' And there is not a certain and earnest expectation of the blessedness to come when the heavenly mind doth not fortify us against the allurements of sense. Now the defect in the vitals sheweth itself—

[1.] By some intermission of our care and caution to keep ourselves from sin, so that we are either overtaken or overborne. Overtaken through inadvertency : Gal. vi. 1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,' &c. ; or overborne by the violence of temptations and lusts : James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed ;' and grace maketh but a feeble opposition. Usually God's children are overtaken by sins that come upon them by insensible degrees, and do not waken them by sudden and frightening assaults, and so they lapse insensibly into pride, covetousness, sensuality, vainglory, and the like sins. But sometimes also they are overborne, and drawn to dishonour God, and wound their peace, and lay stumbling-blocks before others.

[2.] In some abatement of our zeal, fervency, and seriousness in the duties of religion. Grace is ready to die : Rev. iii. 2, 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die ;' Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth on thy name, that stirreth up himself to lay hold on thee.'

[3.] In neglecting our preparations for our great account, which is the great enlivening work that should keep us awake in our business :



2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' And watching is most required and pressed in the scriptures with respect to the day of judgment. Now many times God's children are distracted with worldly cares or benumbed with fleshly delights, and live securely in an unprepared estate, and do not endeavour to get ready for the coming of the Lord. And so the sleeping of the virgins is to be interpreted; they had faith, or a belief of the Lord's coming, and made some general preparation for it: Mat. xxv. 1, 'They went out to meet the bridegroom;' but ver. 5, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept;' his coming was delayed, and they grew careless.

3. How far as to the degree may it seize on God's children?

[1.] There is no intercision of the habit, or radical inclination of the soul to God. Still God is their portion and their happiness; their choice of him as their supreme good remaineth unshaken, and their hearts are set to obey him and please him in all things. But still they are not so dutiful to God, and so true to their great end and scope, but that they are put besides it, and do actions impertinent, and sometimes that seem inconsistent with it.

[2.] It is not an universal slumber and sleep of the whole man, and to all goodness. The heart awaketh: Cant. v. 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' And it is not an estate of sin that they are in, but some particular sins they are tempted to: Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' There is something taketh God's part: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' They are unsatisfied with this drowsy dead estate, and complain of it. They complain of that senseless stupidity, and sluggish dulness, and cold indifferency to heavenly things which they have contracted: Isa. lxiii. 17, 'O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.'

[3.] They are more easily alarmed and roused up out of it than those that sleep the sleep of death, when conscience hath but leisure and help to deliberate; as a candle newly blown out doth sooner suck light than one that was never kindled: Ps. li. title, 'A psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.'

[4.] When they rise again, they are more earnest and fervent than they were before; they resolve, and arm themselves with the stronger resolution for the time to come: Ps. li. 6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' In short, there is a difference between enmity and laziness; some deadness that cometh upon us, and death in sin; between a drowsy fit, and a state of carnal security; between careless living in sin, without any fear of God's wrath and care of repentance, and some coldness and indifferency we contract.

[See some of these heads more enlarged on in the author's Sermon on Mat. xxv. 5.]

Well, then, since it is incident in part to God's children, I will press this admonition on them also.

(1.) Awake. It may seize on the young christian who has as yet no experience of the strength of sin, the danger of temptations, or their own weakness: Mat. xxvi. 33, 'Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' It may seize on one of long standing, who, having made sure of his eternal interests, may grow negligent, as if he were now past all danger: Rev. iii. 17, 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' We are in danger not only in prosperity, but in adversity; as before: Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;' Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' In public and in private duties. In private; so it was with the disciples: Mat. xxvi. 45, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest.' In public: Mat. xiii. 25, 'But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares, and went his way.' Not only upon omission of our duty, but when we have performed some eminent service: 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, 'After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple,' &c., then did he rashly engage against Necho, king of Egypt, which cost him his life: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If the righteous trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity,' &c., viz., by neglecting his watch. Oh, let us watch then: 1 Thes. v. 6, 'Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.' Take heed when a senseless stupidity is growing upon you, or a dulness and want of zeal for God, or any tedious irksomeness in God's service, or too much affection to worldly happiness. If you sleep, you hazard your souls, and expose yourselves to God's severe correction: Hosea v. 15, 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face.' Let us rouse up ourselves: 2 Tim. i. 6, 'Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee.' Beg of God to quicken you, as David often did, Ps. cxix.

(2.) As you would show that you have your part in this lightsome condition of christianity, do not only renounce the works of darkness, but reprove them, and shame them out of the world by a holy awful conversation. We would all have our part in the comfort and peace of christianity; let us all have a hand in representing the glory and lustre of it to the world. Let your religion appear to be manifesting light, not only to direct yourselves, but to convince the world.

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## SERMON XVIII.

*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*

EPH. v. 15.

IN the context the apostle inferreth a change of life from the change of their condition ; they sometimes lived in heathenish darkness, but were now light in the Lord ; and therefore it is an easy deduction he inferreth, that they should walk as children of the light. And then he sheweth them what kind of walk that is—(1.) Negatively, that they should ‘have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’ (2.) Positively, he directeth them here to ‘walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.’

In this direction the duty is—(1.) Propounded ; (2.) Expounded.

1. It is propounded, ‘See that ye walk circumspectly ;’ where—

[1.] The manner ; he would have them regard it as a matter of importance, βλέπετε οὖν, look to it.

[2.] The matter, πῶς ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖτε, how circumspectly ye walk. Mark, it is our *walk* that the apostle speaketh of, or the whole course of our conversations. There may be a zealous fit or pang for a step or two, but the whole course, manner, and tenor of our lives must be thus ordered. And the other word, ἀκριβῶς, signifieth exactly, accurately : Mat. ii. 8, Herod chargeth that they should search diligently for the child. The word is ἀκριβῶς, narrowly. Some may think the apostle intendeth wary carriage, to avoid danger, and save themselves. No ; it is not a politic cautiousness to save a temporal stake, but a holy wisdom to save our souls ; it relateth to our duty to God rather than to danger from men.

2. As it is expounded by a new proposal, which hath also the advantage in it of a motive and argument : ‘Not as fools, but as wise.’ In the judgment of the world you will be accounted fools, but really and indeed this is your wisdom : Deut. iv. 5, 6, ‘Behold I have taught you judgments and statutes, even as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep them therefore, and do them ; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, when they shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ But mark the emphasis ; the apostle speaketh both negatively, ‘Not as fools,’ and positively, ‘But as wise.’

[1.] ‘Not as fools,’ negatively. Fools are a sort of easy people, apt to be seduced and drawn aside to carnal compliances.

[2.] ‘But as wise,’ that is, as men of prudence, who weigh all things, or as those that are endowed with the wisdom of God revealed in his word : Prov. xiv. 8, ‘The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way ;’ Prov. xxiii. 19, ‘Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.’

*Doct.* It is the duty of God’s children to walk exactly or circumspectly.

This is commanded : Heb. xii. 13, ‘Make straight paths for your feet.’ God doth not allow men the liberty to take what way they list, or to enlarge themselves as their fleshly inclinations move them. No ;

their conversations must be bounded and confined within such limits as God hath prescribed : 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more.' The christian faith and the care of our own salvation layeth great obligations upon us to walk exactly, according to the rule that is set unto us, and to improve and increase the holiness that is already in us, that we may please God better than yet we have done. And as it is commanded us, so it is commanded to us as the most comfortable course that we can take : Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.' The word there signifieth to walk orderly and attentively, as soldiers when they keep rank, who do observe their rule or the laws of military discipline. These have peace in their own consciences, and mercy from God in pardoning their many failings. So Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' We think to be so exact is tedious and troublesome. No ; it is the ready way to peace and comfort. Whereas others make a hard shift to go to heaven through many doubts and fears, they have a comfortable sense of their interest in Christ, and live in the delightful foresight of glory to come. The saints are commended for it : Luke i. 6, 'It is said of Zachary and Elizabeth, 'they were both righteous before God, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless ;' that is, were approved and accepted of God as sincere and upright persons, who live in obedience to all God's will, without indulgence to any known sin ; therefore their human frailties are not mentioned and imputed to them. So Paul : Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards men.' That was his daily exercise ; so should we be exactly careful to perform our duties to God and man.

Reasons to evince the necessity of this circumspect walking.

First, We have a strict rule, that doth not yield the least allowance and indulgence to sin. When David had admired the perfections of the law, for the purity of it, and its dominion over the conscience, what was the fruit of that meditation ? Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from secret faults.' The best man living, when he compareth himself with the law of God, will be forced to blush and acknowledge more sins than ever he took notice of before. The law of God is said to be a 'broad law,' and sometimes a 'narrow law.' A broad law : Ps. cxix. 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.' A narrow law, as our way to heaven is called a 'narrow way,' Mat. vii. 14. It is a broad commandment, because it compriseth the whole duty of man. Everything is under a law, not only our actions, but our aims ; there is a law to our thoughts and our desires, and the very sudden and indeliberate motions of our souls. We make too short an exposition of the law, and therefore have too large an opinion of our own righteousness. Again, it is a narrow law, because it alloweth no liberty to corrupt nature to discover and bewray itself. There are extremities on either side to be avoided : Deut. v. 32, 'Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left.' It is a proverbial form of speech, used to signify our exact care to walk in God's laws ; it is taken from passengers, that keep



exactly to the road and highway, from which they could not turn aside on either hand, without trespassing on some one or other. The same speech is used, Isa. xxx. 21, 'This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left;' Prov. iv. 27, 'Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.' Now, then, in a narrow way it is easy to err, for it is hardly found and hardly kept, but the danger of erring is great. Therefore to escape the danger, and that we may walk evenly in the ways that lead to heaven and happiness, we need much circumspection. Let me give you an instance. Solomon saith, Eccles. vii. 16, 17, 'Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?' The meaning is, avoid the faulty extremes on both sides. But then he saith, ver. 18, 'He that feareth God shall come forth of them all;' that is, he that ordereth his ways in the fear of God, turneth not after either to the right hand or to the left; he is neither too stiff and proud in his own conceit, nor too flexible and bending, where his duty forbiddeth compliance.

Secondly, What a holy God we have for our witness, approver, and judge, who will one day call us to an account! This is often pressed: Deut. iv. 23, 24, 'Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he hath made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, which he hath forbidden thee: for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.' Therefore we must not make bold with his name, law, worship, or interest. So to press them to seriousness: Josh. xxiv. 19, 'And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God.' And when he smote the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' It may be you will think this is the character of God as he represented himself to the Jews; but doth not the christian representation of God call for the same respect and reverence? See Heb. xii. 28, 29, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.' He is a God of all grace, but he will not be slighted; his mercy doth not lessen his majesty, nor expose it to contempt. There are two things in this reason—(1.) That God is our witness; and (2.) He must be our approver and judge.

(1.) He looketh on, and seeth all that we do for the present: Ps. cxix. 168, 'I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee.' It is impudence, and great contempt of God, to break his laws before his face. What can we do that is hidden from him and done behind his back? And his inspection is accurate: Prov. xvi. 2, 'The Lord weigheth the spirits.' He not only seeth, but weigheth them.

2. He must be our approver and judge. If we be sincere, we make him so: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him;' 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have

had our conversation in the world.' But whether we will or no, he will call us to an account, and then everything will come into the judgment: Eccles. xii. 14, 'For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' When you reckon with your servants, a general bill doth not serve the turn. Now we cannot be too strict who are to account for all our thoughts, words, and actions. Christ will not take our accounts by heap and in the lump, there will be a narrow search into our hearts and lives.

Thirdly, A great obligation to our strict obedience, as we are children of the light.

1. Surely there should be a great and broad difference between them and the children of darkness. Now it is both a saddening and quickening consideration to consider how far a natural man may go; and if you go lower in the rule of holiness, how can you think yourselves sincere with God? Christ hath told us, Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' As he convinceth the pharisees of unsoundness: Mat. v. 46, 47, 'For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not the publicans so?' What singular thing do ye more than others? So to convince false christians, what do ye more than others? The pharisees were a strict sect; they did profess *περισσέειν*, to exceed, to supererogate; and add to the duty of the law in externals. It were wondrous to tell you what a painful and costly profession they made, insomuch that the Jews had a proverb, that if two men only should be saved, one of them would be a scribe, the other a pharisee, such were their long devotions, large alms, and frequent penances. Now our righteousness must exceed as to principle, manner, and end. The love of God, a more thorough heart-subjection to him, and his glory, must be our scope.

2. Because the more light and knowledge a man hath, the more he is bound to take heed to his ways, that his practice may be according to his light. The children of light can better choose their way and foresee their danger; and if they do not, their sin is double, and so will their punishment be: Luke xii. 47, 'That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' You have more light than others, and therefore you should walk more exactly; to stumble in the dark is not so culpable. None can sin as you do, because none sin against such clear light as you do. You are 'light in the Lord.' The gospel hath not only shined upon you, as the sun may upon an opaque and dark body, but hath also shined into your hearts. You have the light seated in you, and so are made luminous yourselves; therefore you have need to look to the principles, ends, motives, and circumstances of all your actions, that you may do nothing that may afterwards be a shame, disgrace, or grief of heart to you. Whatever vanity, disorder, or confusion is seen in the lives of others, that are carried to no certain scope, but are hurried hither and thither by the uncertain motion of their lusts, you should refer all things to their great end and scope, and not be deceived with a false appearance.



3. They are the light of the world: Mat. v. 14, 'Ye are the light of the world;' Phil. iii. 15, 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.' They should be a copy and pattern to others to invite them to the heavenly life by the strictness and seriousness of their conversations. The same honour is put upon you that was put upon the star at Bethlehem, to be guides to Christ. Therefore you are to be more exemplary, which cannot be without circumspection.

4. Because there are many snares and dangers; as in a chessboard, we can hardly move back or forth but we are ready to be attacked. In all the businesses, affairs, and comforts of this life, we are apt to miscarry. To some their table becometh a snare: Ps. lxxix. 22, 'Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' To others their estates: 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,' 1 Tim. vi. 9. Yea, sometimes there may be a snare in our duties: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;' that is, grow proud by his ministerial service and employments, and so become a sect-master, and make divisions. Now they that are not circumspect are sure to miscarry. He that hath his eyes in his head, and looketh about him, may escape: Prov. i. 17, 'In vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' In short, so many and so subtle are the temptations which Satan sets for us to entrap us and draw us from our duty, that we cannot be circumspect and cautious enough. Therefore we that are placed in the midst of so many dangers and temptations ought to walk circumspectly, that we may not be ensnared: Eph. vi. 11, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' He assaults us not only by force, but cunning; his wiles are more dangerous than his darts, because they do not approach us with such frightening and awakening assaults as his darts do. He conveyeth such ensnaring temptations as he knoweth will best take with the person tempted; and to deal with the children of light, 'He transformeth himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. xi. 14. Some are for grace, others for works; some indulge the flesh, others use the body with more rigour, and will not suffer themselves to be at the whistle of every temptation.

5. Most christians have but a weak heart, that is apt to lead them aside into some unbecoming practice. Our heart is most in danger, and therefore we have need to look to ourselves: 1 Cor. x. 12, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' Those that seem to be most firm and settled have little cause to trust themselves. Though it is true that ordinarily, if the first radical inclination to God and heaven be strengthened, all the other graces grow strong with it, yet many times, yea, most times, it falleth out that christians are weak in some things and strong in others; for all graces do not grow in an equal proportion in true believers, because of some accidental obstruction in the receiver, either through bodily temper, or frequent temptations, or want of serious diligence. So Adam, Solomon, Noah, and others, whose upper soul was considerably furnished and fortified, fell by sensual appetite. Some may have a good proportion of zeal yet

fail in humility ; therefore all graces are not in an equal degree in christians. Some are impotent in bridling a passion, others in bridling the tongue, or checking pride and envy and self-esteem. There is often great zeal with little knowledge ; and again, some have great knowledge with little charity. Therefore how much doth it concern christians to be cautelous. Some have more to do to govern their passions, some to keep down their ruder lusts : Titus iii. 3, ' Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Sometimes the eyes, that they may not let in temptations to the soul : Job xxxi. 1, ' I made a covenant with mine eyes ; why then should I think upon a maid ?' Sometimes the tongue : Ps. xxxix. 1, ' I said, I would take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.' Sometimes the appetite : Prov. xxiii. 2, ' Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.' We are to keep all avenues and passes, but especially to fortify the weakest parts. And in the general let me tell you, there may be a defect in the understanding, but the great cause of all miscarriage is the falseness of the heart ; therefore how can weak hearts bear up against strong temptations ?

6. Consider how many guards God hath set upon man, who is apt to fly out upon all occasions. There is an external guard, the magistrate, who is to watch for thy good, Rom. xiii. 4, that nothing may fall out that may disturb human society. But because that is a lax innocence that doth only exempt us from the danger and stroke of the law, and all sins do not intrench upon the welfare of human society, there is a closer guard upon us. God hath made us and our fellow-christians to be one another's keepers : Heb. iii. 12, ' Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.' In ' any of you ;' as not in yourselves, so not in others : ver. 13, ' But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' We must not hate another, and suffer sin upon him. But because duties of common love and charity are often omitted, therefore this is a debt of justice. Some are appointed by way of office and charge : Heb. xiii. 17, ' Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.' It is a grief to them when they cannot give a good account of you to the Lord. But church officers cannot be everywhere ; they cannot follow you into your families, and closets, and retirements, or pry into every corner ; and therefore there is an invisible guard upon you, the holy angels : 1 Cor. xi. 10, ' For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels ;' 1 Tim. v. 21, ' I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.' The angels observe you when anything unseemly passeth from you in worship or in ordinary conversation. A man can hardly be alone ; wherever he goeth, there are good and bad angels in his company. Now because the angels cannot know the heart unless it be by guess and ratiocination, therefore there is a spirit in man which knoweth the things which are in man : 1 Cor. ii. 11, ' For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ?' Conscience is God's



deputy, and doth accuse and excuse by turns. Whithersoever we go, we carry an accuser and a witness about with us. None can escape this domestic tribunal. Conscience is either troublesome or quiet as we behave ourselves; your own thoughts will be upon you, and your hearts reproach you. A godly man would not hazard the checks of his own conscience, and therefore prevents the cause and occasion of them. But because conscience is often stupefied and benumbed, there is besides this the Spirit of God, who observeth all that we do. The Spirit cannot be blinded, and therefore cannot be mistaken; not a motion in the soul but he is acquainted with it. The good motions are of his own operation, the bad oppose his work. He witnesseth our sincerity: Rom. ix. 1, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.' He is grieved with our disorders, Eph. iv. 30, therefore we ought to walk circumspectly.

7. Because there are so many spies upon us, who may make an ill use of our failings.

I shall instance in three—Satan, wicked men, and weak brethren.

[1.] Satan. The devil is our enemy; he is called our adversary: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' He watcheth to get some advantage against us: 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' He seeketh how to work upon our mistaken judgments or carnal affections: 1 Cor. vii. 5, 'That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.' He observeth us in all our postures, and lays many temptations in the way, and hath hidden secret darts to mischief our souls which we think not of. Now shall not we be watchful and circumspect?

[2.] Your way is most eyed by wicked men, who also watch for your halting: Jer. xx. 10, 'For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.' Besides that we are in the sight of God and his angels, we have many enemies who will triumph in our miscarriages, and so strengthen themselves in their wickedness. They would fain draw something from us that may be either a justification of them or matter of sport to them. To surprise a child of God in his nakedness is their mirth, as the sight of Noah's nakedness was to cursed Ham. John Baptist's head in a charger is an usual dish at most men's tables; reports, true or false, concerning some eminent servant of God gratify and feed their prejudices. There is an envious desire in man to blast eminency, especially religious eminency, because it upbraideth and reviveth guilt in the minds of others, and therefore the world would have somewhat to blemish them. Because they will not come up to the holiness of others, they seek to take others down to themselves, and hope their censure shall excuse their not imitating their graces and virtues. The apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. iv. 9, that God's servants are set forth to be made 'a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' Who would not then watch over himself when others watch over him? So that their very slanderers are a help to watchfulness; as one chose rather to live among

his enemies than his friends, to make him wary and cautious, for then he should be sure to hear of his faults. I am sure the word of God enforceth strictness upon this account: Col. iv. 5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.' And David prayeth for direction because of his observers: Ps. xxvii. 11, 'Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies;' in the margin it is, 'because of my observers.' In short, they had need be circumspect themselves who are to reprove others, both by word and deed.

[3.] There are weak brethren, which are enough to bind us to circumspection if there were no other argument, for fear of offending Christ's little ones, or prejudicing any one who is hopefully coming on in the way of religion. To lay stumbling-blocks in the way of young converts is a great sin; it is like killing a child in the womb by a stroke: 2 Kings v. 26, 'Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?' Is this a time to receive bribes, when a Syrian nobleman had been but newly gained to a reverence and respect of the God of Israel? Take heed you do not stumble them: Mat. xviii. 6, 'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' Better suffer a violent and ignominious death than prejudice and hinder the salvation of any.

*Use. Of reproof.*

1. Of those that scoff at strictness and accurate walking. These scoff at that which is the glory of that religion which they do profess, that which God aimed at, that which Christ purchased, that which the Spirit worketh. They are guilty of persecution: Gal. iv. 29, 'But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.' That persecution was scoffing and mocking about the inheritance; we are as much in the favour of God as the precisest of them all: Gen. xxi. 9, 'And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.' Will a father take it well that a slave should mock his child because he is like him? You will say, It is not their holiness and purity you laugh at, but their folly and preciseness. But is it foolish to be tender of God's laws? Which is better, to conform ourselves to God's will or men's sinister fashions and customs? Can a man keep at too great a distance from sin? But it is preciseness and fond scrupulosity. So did the conversations of christians seem to the old pagans: 1 Peter iv. 3, 4, 'For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' And shall it be so among seeming christians? Have we not the same bible? do we not believe the same creed? are we not baptized into the same profession? and will you blame them for being strict and serious for that in which you are vain and loose? Can God be too much loved, or Christ too much prized, or a man more holy than Christ hath required? And will you oppose the practice of those things which your religion calleth you to as well as them, and please yourselves with the name, and hate them because



they have the power? You will say you hate them for their hypocrisy and dissimulation, and their other miscarriages, notwithstanding their seeming strictness. Surely it is not sin you hate, for then you would declaim more against the profane, in whom sin is more notorious. The plain truth is, your hearts cannot away with their godliness; and if you did hate sin in them, you would pity their persons, not scoff at, but reprove them: Phil. iii. 18, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ.' It may be they have their failings; but will you cast yourselves into the sea because they are fallen into a ditch? Or doth it become a man infected with leprosy to cry out upon another because he hath a pimple in his face? And especially to fall upon the whole generation of the just, as if you would judge of a street by the sink and kennel, or of the sound grapes by the rotten ones.

2. It reproveth them that think men are more nice than wise, that we make more ado than needeth when we press men to a constant watchfulness and serious diligence in the heavenly life. Oh, consider, we have slippery hearts, and live in the midst of temptations, and are to approve ourselves in the sight of the holy God, who expecteth to be glorified by us. And we are not to give just cause of offence to men, 'neither to Jew, nor gentile, nor to the church of God,' 1 Cor. x. 32. We are to take heed that wicked men be not hardened by our example, nor weak brethren scandalised. We are by a constant exercise of grace to maintain comfortable communion with God, to cherish clear and lively hopes of eternal life, especially in an age when men are to recover the credit of religion after the professors of it have miscarried so foully. In short, we that believe eternity, that there is a heaven and a hell, and that every action of ours is in its own nature a step either to life or death, how circumspect should we be! Alas! loose christians make the world believe that hell and heaven are but things spoken of in jest. Should not we therefore 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling?' Phil. ii. 12. What sense have men of the world to come, when they do so little in order to it? What is that you call religion, that you can get it and keep it up without so much ado? A man may have estate enough for two men, and yet not be satisfied; the best hath scarce grace enough for one. Here is the mischief of it, men are for moderation in nothing else but religion, and there a little serveth the turn.

3. Some slight strictness as a thing out of date, since they know their liberty by Christ. Alas! all the doctrines of grace do enforce it, not lessen it: Titus ii. 11, 12, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Else they are abused: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.' Christ's death and sufferings show us the vileness of sin, and what a high price God hath put upon his law. He is gone into heaven, not to resign up his kingdom to Satan, but to make intercession for grace; not only to pardon, but mortify sin. The whole frame of the covenant doth oblige us to this strictness: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and

glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly ;' Mat. v. 19, ' Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'

4. It reproveth those that profess themselves children of light, but live at large ; though they do not scoff at strictness, yet they slight it, and so show themselves fools rather than wise ; they miss the comfort of the spiritual life, and are only acquainted with the toil and trouble of it.

*Use 2.* Is to exhort us to this duty. You have had motives enough before, now I shall give you some helps.

There are some graces necessary, and some practices.

First, For graces which are necessary, such as these—

1. Knowledge ; for without knowledge neither heart nor life can be good : Prov. xix. 2, ' That the soul be without knowledge is not good.' David prayeth, Ps. cxix. 34, ' Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law.' It is a matter of much skill to be a thorough christian.

2. Not only knowledge, but prudence. That differeth from knowledge, as folly doth from ignorance. That referreth all things to practice : Prov. ii. 10, 11, ' When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee ;' Hosea xiv. 9, ' Who is wise, and he shall understand these things ? prudent, and he shall know them ? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them.'

3. Watchfulness, and heed that nothing unseemly pass from us. Those that are rash and indeliberate, and live at haphazard, can never walk accurately : Prov. xix. 2, ' He that hasteth with his feet, sinneth.' In the text βλέπετε, ' See that ye walk circumspectly ;' that is, use great caution. Conscience must act the part of the watchman, and stand porter at the door, examine what goeth in or out, that nothing may be a snare or an offence : Prov. iv. 23, ' Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' That the heart may be still kept pure and loyal for God.

4. The fear of God : Acts ix. 31, ' They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' This is a grace never out of season : Prov. xxiii. 17, ' Let not thine heart envy sinners ; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long ;' Prov. xxviii. 14, ' Happy is the man that feareth always ;' that is, with a fear of reverence, for slavish fear is a terror. Set yourselves always in God's sight ; our whole time is spent in it.

5. Diligence, that we may both remove impediments of good and avoid occasions of evil, that you may take an accurate inspection of your whole life and conversation. Frequently examine your ways, whither they tend : Prov. iv. 26, 27, ' Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left ; remove thy foot from evil.'

6. A tender conscience. Make conscience not only of gross sins, but lesser escapes. Some walk ἀτάκτως, disorderly, 2 Thes. iii. 11, but do you walk ἀκριβῶς, circumspectly. Do not wittingly tread one



hair's-breadth out of the way, nor run into any sin, much less live in it, be it never so small and profitable in the esteem of the world: Prov. vii. 2, 'Keep my commandments, and live, and my law as the apple of thine eye.' The eye is offended with the least dust.

Secondly, Helps by way of practice.

1. Fix your end; for when the end is fixed, the means may be the better suited; it shineth to us all the way along: 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light,' Mat. vi. 22; Prov. iv. 25, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.' We should mind all things with respect to our end.

2. Take an account of the way you walk in: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' Lam. iii. 40, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.'

3. Seek a good guide. Use much prayer to God, that he may direct you: Prov. iii. 5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path;' Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.'

4. Renew your covenant, and often engage yourselves afresh to this strict and holy walking, because the strength of former resolutions is soon spent: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

5. Season the heart with strict principles. Two principles I shall commend to you—

[1.] That the greatest suffering is to be chosen before the least sin. In suffering, the offence is done to us; in sin, to God. The evil of suffering is but for a moment, the evil of sin for ever. Sin separateth you from God, but afflictions do not, but bring you nearer to God. The least sin allowed maketh our sincerity doubtful and questionable: Ps. lxvi. 18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Small sins have met with great judgments. Adam for eating an apple was turned out of paradise; Uzzah for touching the ark was smitten with death; Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for one lie; the evil angels were thrust out of heaven for an aspiring thought; Zacharias was struck dumb for unbelief; Lot's wife for looking back was turned into a pillar of salt; Moses for a few passionate words was shut out of the land of promise; David for a proud conceit in numbering the people brought a plague upon them. Now God is the same, and hateth sin as much as ever. No man is driven to a necessity of sinning. We imagine a necessity when we commit one sin to avoid the temptation of another, but God never reduceth a man to that strait. If you mean it of evils of sin, it is false; if of evils of punishment, it is true; if of evils of sin and punishment together, it is most true. A man may be often put to suffer for sin that is offered to his choice, but never to sin that he may not sin. We reduce ourselves to sinful straits.

[2.] Another strict principle is, that a man cannot be too strict. There is no *nimium* in the essentials of religion or the solid parts of godliness. A man cannot be too holy and too righteous; a man cannot love God too much, or Christ too much, nor serve him too faith-

fully. What is the meaning then of Solomon? Eccles. vii. 16, 'Be not righteous overmuch.' There may be too much of that which is but pretended righteousness. The best fall short of what God's word and the necessities of their souls require. The world accuseth them of preciseness, but their consciences accuse them of negligence.

(1.) God's precepts are very strict: Mat. xxii. 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' God is to be loved without measure and limitation. To think this is too strict is to blaspheme his holy law.

(2.) Patterns of holiness are very high. God's worthies: Heb. xii. 1, 'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' The angels: Mat. vi. 10, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' God himself: 1 Peter i. 15, 'But as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Wherein then is this over-righteousness? I answer—Not in the end, not in necessary diligence about the means; but when the means are not proportioned to the end, but one duty shuts out another; in some things the devil may tempt us to over-doing

[3.] Another strict principle is, that the least sin allowed makes our sincerity questionable: James ii. 10, 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' It is good to stand at the greatest distance from sin; to go too near the brink is dangerous: 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' They that do all that they may do usually do more than they should. Small sins may procure great trouble, if God sets them home upon the conscience.

## SERMON XIX.

*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*—Eph. v. 16.

THESE words contain a new direction to the children of light. Two things there are in it—(1.) A duty, 'Redeeming the time;' (2.) The reason of it, 'Because the days are evil.'

First, In the duty there is the act and the object. Both must be explained.

1. The act, *ἐξαγοραζόμενοι*, buying; or, as we render it, 'redeeming.' Grotius and some others conceive it may be explained by the words of Nebuchadnezzar to the astrologers, as they are rendered by the Septuagint, Dan. ii. 8, 'Ye would gain the time,' *ὅτι καιρὸν ὑμεῖς ἐξαγοράζετε*. And others think the meaning is, that by their wary carriage they should shift off dangers, and gain as much time as they could to honour God in the world. To this purpose also they draw in that, Col. iv. 5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.' But besides that this exposition would



bereave us of a very practical lesson, it seemeth not proper to this place.

[1.] Because the drift of the apostolical writings is to draw men to a contempt of life, and to a cheerful suffering of persecutions, not to clancular arts how to shift them.

[2.] Because it is drawn from the consideration of their being 'children of light,' or 'light in the Lord,' and the obligation that lieth upon them of 'walking as children of light;' and that will rather enforce a holy conversation for the conviction of heathens, than a wary carriage to shun their rage, and a trouble for their own safety. Well, then, what is the meaning of 'redeeming the time,' or buying the time? The term is proper to civil contracts, but is here applied morally.

(1.) In buying there is some price paid; we part with one thing to obtain another; so we must part with anything less than it rather than lose time; as Prov. xxiii. 23, 'Buy the truth, and sell it not.' No temporal conveniency is too dear to be parted with to get truth and retain truth. As merchants stand upon no rate or price if they may get such wares into their hands as they may make benefit of, so time is such a precious commodity, and so useful to us in order to eternity, that we should not stand upon ease, carnal pleasures, and worldly conveniences, that we may purchase it.

(2.) *Emptum cedit in jus emptoris*, that which is bought belongeth to the buyer; and so the Greek scholiast, ἀγοράζειν τὸν καιρὸν ἐστὶν ἴδιον ποιεῖν, so buy time to make it your own for spiritual advantages. But our translation useth the word *redeem*, which implieth another metaphor, namely the recovery of a mortgage, or the redeeming of what hath been lost or pawned out; and so it noteth our former improvident misspence of time. We have, as it were, mortgaged it to Satan, to the world, and to vanity, and now should redeem it out of the hands of these engrossers, and by future diligence recover our former neglect.

2. The object, τὸν καιρὸν, 'the time.' The word properly signifieth the season and opportunity, but yet it is the usual word for time in scripture, for to a christian all time is season. Time in general is but short: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short.' But the season or opportunity, which is the flower of time, is shorter; therefore this must not be slipped: Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.' There are special seasons of getting, or doing of good, and they continue not long with us; they are always in passing, and being passed, will not possibly return; therefore we should take them when they are fairly offered.

Secondly, The reason by which this duty is enforced, 'Because the days are evil.' Herein I shall—(1.) Give the meaning of the phrase; (2.) The force of the consequence.

1. For the meaning of the phrase.

[1.] It may be understood of the whole course or race of man's life: Gen. xlvii. 9, 'And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' They are few in themselves, but especially in comparison with eternity; and they are evil in regard of

sin and misery. In heaven they are neither few nor evil ; here it is a mercy they are few, because they are evil. Time in itself is neither good nor evil, but in regard of the accidents of time, as it is encumbered with variety of vexations, cares, and miseries, so our days may be called evil. And in this sense we must take that of our Saviour, Mat. vi. 34, 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.' Every day bringeth evil enough and sorrow enough to exercise us. Therefore you had need to lay up for a better life, for you have but sorry evil days here.

[2.] More properly and specially it relateth to the times the apostle wrote in, which were hard and calamitous, and full of danger, because of the wickedness of those among whom they lived. There were many enemies then, both to christian verity and piety. They lived among heathens, and troubles every day grew more sore and fierce, as also near and close. Paul himself felt the smart of them. This epistle was written out of prison ; so that these days were evil indeed.

2. The force of the consequence. You may conceive it many ways.

[1.] Because others vainly misspend time, christians should be more careful to redeem it. The worse the times are, the better should we be, as fountain water is hottest in the coldest weather, and stars shine brightest in the darkest night. This consideration is not amiss, for they were to 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them ;' that is, in their practice ; and christians are to 'shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and froward generation,' Phil. ii. 15. God's children are best in the worst times, more strict and watchful when sin aboundeth. The world saith it is an evil time ; we must do as much as we can to reclaim their lukewarmness. Let us rather labour to do good than complain of the evil of the times, and so seek to make them better.

[2.] Adversity maketh men serious. It was the aggravation of Ahaz's sin, that he was the worse for his misery, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. If ever a man would be serious and circumspect, it should be in his misery : Heb. xii. 10, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'

[3.] With relation to the heathens among whom they lived, he adviseth them to redeem the time : Col. iv. 5, 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.' Men that live a profane life themselves, as the unconverted heathens did, take all occasions to speak evil of religion, or of those that embrace a different course. Give them no advantage, but by your sedulous diligence in the heavenly life keep up a full testimony in their consciences against that which they practise.

[4.] Some are so bad and froward, that they would take away liberty, estates, yea, life itself from you, and with it all occasions of doing and receiving good. You carry your own lives in your hands, and the lives of many of God's precious instruments are in danger ; and therefore before means and opportunities be wholly lost, redeem the time. This I take to be the principal consideration ; and other scriptures enforce it : Eccles. xi. 2, 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.' It is wisdom to do God's work in God's time. We may die, or our estates or our



liberty be taken from us; it is good to be aforehand with the times, and take the season while it lasteth: John ix. 4, 'I must work the works of him that sent me whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.' Opportunities being lost, they are not easily if at all recovered: John xi. 9, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?' There is a prefixed time. A man would not neglect the daytime to go about his business. As long as providence continueth the occasions and opportunities of exercising our functions and abilities, we should not alarm ourselves with needless fears, but be quickened to the more serious diligence. When God hath a mind to use us, he can secure us and keep us safe: John xii. 35, 'Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you;' and ver. 36, 'While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of the light;' that is, I am not long to stay with you as the light of the world; make use of me while you have me, or else you are like to be left in a blind unhappy condition for ever. Get your knowledge complete, directions sure, that you may live like christians when I am gone. The scriptures are so full and so apposite, that we need no more to explain the words.

*Doct.* That it is the duty of christians to look to the due improvement of the time and season.

I shall draw out the force of the apostle's exhortation in this method—

1. The commodity that we are to buy, and that is, time and season.
2. The use we are to put it to, that is, to glorify God, and save our souls.

3. The encouragements to the bargain.

I. The commodity or thing to be bought, *καιρὸς*; the word signifieth time and season, the general and particular opportunity.

1. Time. Our whole life is but the larger season; it is not time that you may spend as you list, but it is opportunity given you for the great work and business of your souls.

[1.] If you have not begun already by conversion, it must not be delayed and left to uncertainties. The sooner you begin to buy time, the better bargain you will have; for every man would have as much for his money as possibly he can, therefore take the market while it is at the best: Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' While the effects of his creating bounty are fresh in our sense and feeling, as they are in the flower and vigour of youth, then let us remember the duty, love, and service we owe to our Creator. Then we have more advantages to serve him, senses lively, affections tender, wits more nimble and acute. If there must be a change, it is better it should be sooner than later; a twig is more easily bent than a bough or the limb of a tree. By degrees we grow stiff and habituated to sin: Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' David was not of their opinion that think that religion doth not become us while we are young: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?' Many think devotion is better received when their youthful heats are spent. No; then there is more need of its grave precepts to check the fervour of youthful lusts (as the putting in

of cold water stays the boiling of the hot), and to mortify the flesh and rule the senses. Where nature hath disabled the body, there is somewhat the less for grace to do. The scriptures always call for a present obedience: 'To-day, if you will hear his voice,' Heb. iii. 7. A man cannot set forth too soon in his journey to heaven. There is little love to God, to think of repenting when we can sin no longer; you can be contented that God should be longer dishonoured and disobeyed, provided that at length you may be saved. No; it is best and most acceptable when you seek the Lord betimes, and give him the kindness of your youth. We have the whole duration of God to reflect upon for our comfort: Ps. xc. 2, 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world: even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God,' compared with Ps. ciii. 17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children.' And shall we adjourn and put off God to an odd corner of our lives, to the decrepitness of old age; and when the devil hath feasted on your youth, give him the fragments of the table? It is an honour to us as well as to God to begin betimes. We read of Mnason of Cyprus, 'an old disciple,' Acts xxi. 16, and of Epenetus, 'the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ,' Rom. xvi. 5; and of Andronicus and Junia, 'who are of note (honourable) among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me,' Rom. xvi. 7. It is good to have the priority and precedency in grace. When some believe in Christ sooner, others later, it is the mighty effect of God's goodness to us, and no small privilege, that we believe sooner than others, that we are freed from the slavery of Satan and our own lusts, and have our great concerns the sooner put out of hazard. The apostle took notice of those 'who first trusted in Christ,' Eph. i. 12, as having a prerogative and degree of honour above others.

[2.] After you are once admitted into the evangelical estate, your whole time should be redeemed and spent for God: Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' Not now and then only; your whole time is God's, though not to be spent in one sort of duties; not only in duties of immediate worship, but in the duties of your callings also, but still to God: Rom. vi. 10, the example of Christ is urged, 'in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' God must be ultimately and terminatively at the end of every action, though some things that we do may nextly and immediately concern ourselves or others. Acts of direct worship concern God immediately, other acts of our callings, yea, and recreations, concern God ultimately. A christian's end is the measure of all his actions, and he must do nothing impertinent thereunto, or inconsistent therewith. If christians did mind this, what a spirit of holiness would it awaken and breed in us! So Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' I must not only hear or pray in faith, but trade in faith, yea, take food and physic in faith, and eat and drink in faith. Grace must still act, and elevate, and raise the intention to God, and overrule the rational life to higher ends: Zech. xiv. 20, 21, 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls



before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.' Not only sacred, but common actions must have God's impress upon them. Thus figuratively doth he describe the holiness of the gospel. We are never sincere and upright with God till we turn all our second-table duties into first-table duties, and perform all our actions in the fear and love and for the glory of God: 1 Peter i. 17, 'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' Our whole conversation must be seasoned with grace. As God discovereth his divine power in the least of his creatures, in the framing of a gnat as well as in the sun, so must a christian show himself a christian in all his actions, in his devotions, in his business, and in his recreations: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' But could they always serve God? There is something else to be done, eating, drinking, caring for our bodily interests, industry in our callings. The expression noteth the constancy of their worship; they did every day and every night consecrate some part of their time to the worship of God, and kept themselves in an aptitude for prayer and other holy duties as occasion did require. But also it sheweth not only their constancy, but their integrity; when employed in works of charity, or their vocation, they did in all their actions study to honour God: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.' Eating and drinking is an offering; but it is not a meat-offering and drink-offering to the belly, or sensual appetite, but a service to God: 'Do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Col. iii. 17. In all these actions we must study to approve ourselves to God. A christian hath many works to do, to examine his title and right to eternal life, to be much in penitent exercises, to be bemoaning sin and begging mercy, to instruct his children and servants, in the sanctified labours of his outward calling; but night and day he is serving God.

2. The season: buy it whatever it cost you. The season of receiving good and of doing good.

[1.] Of receiving good, and that—

(1.) From God. God's seasons and opportunities must not be over-slipped. There are special times when God, by a fair concurrence of all circumstances, maketh nearer approaches to a sinner than at other times: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.' God's times are not at the beck of our desires; he will be observed in his near approaches, as when he is ministerially near by pressing exhortations; this season must not be carelessly past over: John xii. 36, 'While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of the light.' Christ speaketh there of his own personal ministry. So when God is preparatorily near by the checks of conscience and the convictions of his Holy Spirit: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn ye at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.' It is dangerous to let such convictions die away in our hearts, as Felix stifled gripes of conscience. No iron so hard as that which hath been often heated and often quenched, and none so hardened in sin as they that have lost the advantage of a sound conviction. So when he is savingly near by the

drawings of his Spirit, we should not delay and put off such a work of concernment as our return to God is ; his treaty of peace may soon break up, and the covenant be out of your reach. When he draweth you should run, Cant. i. 4 ; when he knocketh, you should open, Rev. iii. 20. And sometimes we feel that he knocketh hard and loud. When the wind blows, we should loose the sails, John iii. 8 ; when the waters are stirred, we should put in for cure, John v. 4. Set about the business before these motions cool, and lose their efficacy. When the spouse would not open to her beloved, it cost her afterwards many a weary step and bitter sigh, Cant. v. 6, 7. Many times God doth as it were call us by name, by speaking to our case and condition. Now it is dangerous to let that time slip when God doth as it were single thee out to make thee an object of his grace. Remember the Spirit doth not always strive with sinners : Gen. vi. 3, ' My Spirit shall not always strive with man.'

(2.) To receive good from men ; as when God in his providence casteth you upon the company of wise and holy persons, and you have excellent advantages of being built up in your most holy faith ; as when the disciples had Christ's company and personal presence with them : John xii. 35, ' Yet a little while is the light with you ; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.' And elsewhere he chideth them for profiting no more by his converse with them : John xiv. 9, ' Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? ' That they knew so little of the dignity of his person and office. So elsewhere he reproves Martha, who was so busily employed about the service of the entertainment, while Mary sat at his feet (the posture of hearers) and heard his gracious words, Luke x. 41, 42. In good company we have a fairer opportunity of exhorting and quickening one another, of getting doubts resolved, and scruples answered. Solomon telleth us, Prov. xx. 5, ' Counsel in the heart of man is like a deep water ; but a man of understanding will draw it out.' We must improve these seasons of receiving good to our souls : Rom. i. 12, ' That I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.'

[2.] Of doing good. There are special seasons of performing our duty to God and man.

(1.) To God. Many times we are strangely influenced and acted by the impulsion of the Spirit ; now upon such occasions we should not hang off : Ps. xxvii. 8, ' When thou saidst, Seek ye my face ; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' God speaketh to us by the injection of holy thoughts and the secret excitations of his grace, and we speak to him by real and ready returns of obedience.

(2.) For doing good to men, to their souls and bodies. We should take all occasions of drawing others from their sins, and gaining them to Christ. If we lose time, we should not lose opportunity. Sometimes providence puts an opportunity in our mouths, as Nehemiah had of speaking to the king concerning Jerusalem that lay waste : Neh. ii. 5, ' And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me into Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchre, that I may build it.' So Esther iv. 14, ' Who knoweth but thou art come to the kingdom



for such a time as this?' Some seem to be made and raised up by providence for such a turn. We read of Paul, Acts xvii. 16, 'His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.' Impulse of spirit, though it make not new duties, yet it determineth the circumstances of a duty already known. Sometimes a word in season doth mightily prevail for instructing, comforting, and converting of others. So we must not neglect the seasons of visiting, feeding, clothing, when God casteth us upon the occasion: 1 John iii. 17, 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' When Christ so happily met with the woman of Canaan, he falleth a-talking with her for the good of her soul, John iv. 7. But for improving the season, more afterwards. Let it suffice to intimate now, that everything is beautiful in its season: Eccles. iii. 17, 'There is a time for every purpose, and for every work.' Blood out of its proper vessels soon corrupts; so things done out of their season do more hurt than good.

II. The use we must put it to when we have gotten this commodity into our hands. It is a precious commodity; you should never let it go but for something better than itself. There are two great ends, the glorifying of God, and the saving of our own souls.

1. One great end in employing our time is the glorifying of God: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' So should every christian say when he cometh to die. Christ had his work, and we have ours. Christ's work was the work of mediation; ours the work of constant service and thankfulness. We must employ all our talents of gifts, place, and relation, to God's glory. All things glorify God in the event, the wrath of man not excepted; but this must be our choice and scope: 'The wrath of man shall praise thee,' Ps. lxxvi. 10. The fierce endeavours of his enemies; it is no thanks to them, but to the wisdom of his providence; it doth not lessen their fault nor punishment. But we must actively glorify God, not passively and objectively only. We are made for this end: Prov. xvi. 4, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' And we are made new creatures for this end: Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory.' The saints above spend all their time in glorifying God without difficulty, strife, and danger; it cost them no shame nor pain, neither trouble nor loss of life or limb; but we must glorify him upon earth in the midst of opposition, if we would be glorified with him in heaven, and be out of gunshot as they are. We are more careful of events than duties. When the days are evil we are apt to inquire, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name? Do not ask what God will do, but consider what you must do. You must glorify him though he be dishonoured by others; and you should trouble yourselves more with what you should do than what shall become of you.

2. The other great end is the saving of our own souls; that is the use of our time: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' Because the apostle's words give me a fit method, I shall a little insist on them.

[1.] Our great work is to enter into God's peace, to be found of him

in a renewed and reconciled estate. This is of unspeakable importance, and this is *opus diei in die suo*, the business of our day : Luke xix. 42, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace;' and Luke ii. 14, 'Peace upon earth.' The day was given you to make your peace. All mankind was lost in Adam; God will give them a day to come in and recover themselves. Some men have but thirty, some forty, some fifty, some sixty years; but alas! the most part do not mind the work of the day. Surely this is your great business. It is a work worthy your time, and all the labour you bestow upon it. It is a most necessary work: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful.' It is a most excellent work to be in a state of amity with God, to have the great breach made up, and difference compromised: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' And the 11th verse, 'We have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' It is a most profitable work, for it procureth us the blessings of this life, and of a better: Mat. vi. 33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' It is better for soul and body: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' How comfortable will it be when we go out of the world, to say with Christ, John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' with Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing;' with Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' It is a great contentment to a mariner, after a dangerous voyage, to come safe ashore.

[2.] 'Without spot.' This relateth to the soul, and the filthiness contracted by sin. This is your business, to get out your deep and inveterate stain. You began as soon as you made conscience of your baptism, and you never leave till it be perfected in glory: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust;' 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.'

[3.] The third word, 'without blame,' relateth to the conversation: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' Carry on a blameless conversation in the world, obnoxious to no just reproof, that neither by the omission of any known duty, nor by the commission of any known sin, you may give others just cause of offence; but be always working out your salvation with fear and trembling.



## SERMON XX.

*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*—EPH. v. 16.

THIRDLY, I shall now proceed to the encouragements to the bargain to redeem time and season.

First, Let me press you to redeem the time.

1. Too much time hath been spent already : 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us.' In infancy we were in no capacity to act grace ; we lived the life of sense rather than reason, and did only feed and sleep. When we began to bewray our reason, we showed the folly that was bound up in our hearts, and since that we have spent a great deal of precious time in sin. Now as travellers that have stayed long in their inn mend their pace, and ride as much in an hour as before in two, so because we have spent much time already, we should redeem time : Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light ;' the text that converted Augustine, who opened the bible in this place, when he heard a voice, saying, *Tolle, lege*. We have all been too long disputing and traversing the case with God ; it is good to come to a resolution, and break off the old, vain, sinful, carnal way of living, that we may at length set about the work of godliness.

2. We are to be accountable to God for time. When he cometh to reckon with his people, time is one of the circumstances mentioned, either for the aggravating sin or commending his mercies : Ps. xcv. 10, 'Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.' God might have reckoned with you twenty, thirty, forty years ago, with honour enough to his justice ; but he hath borne with you all this while. So for commending his mercies : Luke xiii. 7, 'Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree.' When the scripture speaketh in such cases *numeris rotundis*, in round numbers, as ten, twenty, or the like, we need not inquire after the interpretation, but it signifies a long time. But when there is *numerus impar*, an uneven number, why is it three years rather than four or six ? I answer—Look to the harmony of the evangelists, and you will find that after Christ's baptism he had spent three years in the ministry, and was now entering upon his fourth year. God keepeth an exact account how long we have learned of him : Heb. v. 12, 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers of others, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God ;' Jer. xxv. 3, 'From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day (that is, the three and twentieth year), the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you.' God keepeth an exact account ; full three and twenty years had he been reclaiming them. All these things are but pledges of the great process at the day of judgment. God will call you to an account, not simply for your mercies and sins, but for the time you have spent, so long patience, so much means. Oh, then, reflect upon thine own heart : I must die, and give an account for all

my time, and I cannot give an account of one day among a hundred ; my time hath been spent in foolish mirth, troublesome cares, and idle company, in vain sports and recreations. Pass a reckoning upon your time for the present, and if you cannot answer conscience, you cannot answer God. So much in meals and banquets, so much in sleep, so much in sports and recreations, so much in worldly business ; and then think how little a remainder is there for God. I remember an account of a phantastic in Plutarch, that gave thus much time to his barber, thus much to his perfumer, tailor, cook, and half to his philosopher.

3. That time is only yours which is spent well, in pleasing God, and doing good ; for that time is bought and redeemed which otherwise is lost to you. We lose all that time which is not spent in the love and service of God. Strictly and properly we are never said to live as long as we are alienated from the life of God. A man may abide long in the world, till he be eaten out by his own rust, or droppeth like rotten fruit ; but he cannot be said to live long ; as a man may be long at sea, but is tossed to and fro by the waves, yet he cannot be said to make a long voyage when driven back into the port out of which he came at first. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 6, 'But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Her time is useless, lost as to all spiritual purposes. You are a loser by that day in which you have not done or received some good.

4. Time is not ours to dispose of at pleasure. A christian, when he giveth up himself to God, he giveth up everything that is his to God, time and strength as well as body and soul ; he hath nothing at his own dispose, so that he hath nothing that he is absolute master of to use it as he pleaseth : 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot ?' My time is not mine, but Christ's. It is sacrilege to rob God of what is consecrated to him. My *το ζην*, to live is Christ, Phil. i. 21.

5. Time is a precious commodity, worth the looking after. The devil values it ; if he can cheat you of your time, he can cheat you of your souls ; for when conviction is strong, and all your prejudices are borne down, and his outworks taken, excuses and self-flatteries vanish. The last thing that he is loath to let go is time ; his game is to cheat you of to-day, and so of the next day. God saith, 'To-day,' Heb. iii. 13 ; and the devil saith, Not to-day, but at a more convenient season ; as Felix put off Paul, Acts xxiv. 25, 'When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee,' as to be rid of a troublesome creditor, we promise future payment. *Modo et modo non habent modum*—the sinner's morrow will never come. In hell they know the worth of time. Dying men that are affrighted in conscience discover the passions of the damned. What would they give for one year, one month longer, yea, for one week, or one day more ! But all the wealth in the world will not purchase a day.

6. The present time is the best : Ps. cxix. 60, 'I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.' Ludovicus Cappellus telleth us of a Jewish rabbin, who being asked when a man should repent, answered, One day before his death ; that is, presently, this day ; it may be your last in the world : 'Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heaven and hell is in



the case; heaven is to be gotten or lost. Speed is necessary. We are commanded to 'fly from the wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7, and to 'fly for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us,' Heb. vi. 18. Your business is to avoid everlasting death, and to prepare for everlasting life.

7. You have no time but what may be serviceable for some good use. There is no time wherein thou dost not enjoy some blessing to provoke thee to thankfulness, or hast not some sin to be mortified, or some good work to be done. David had his morning meditation, Ps. xix., and his evening thoughts: Ps. viii. 3, 'When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;' and his night meditations when he could not sleep: 'My reins also instruct me in the night season,' Ps. xvi. 7. When the rain falleth: Job xxxvii. 7, 'He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.' We have a great deal of work to do in a short time.

8. We have much work to do, therefore let us spend it in matters that most concern us. We all complain of the shortness of time, and yet every one hath more time than he useth well. We should rather complain of the loss of time than the want of time. *Vitam non accepimus brevem, sed facimus; nec tam inopes temporis sumus, quam prodigi.* We do not want time so much as waste it; much more might be done for God than ever yet hath been done, if we were serious and diligent. We make our lives shorter than they are by interposing so many unnecessary diversions, and spending so much time as we do in vanity and folly and needless recreations. Every man should call himself to an account how he spendeth his precious hours: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' What do I spend my time and labour upon? Works of absolute necessity must be first done and most minded: 'One thing is needful,' Luke x. 42; this is *unum necessarium* and *unum magnum*, the one thing and the great thing: Phil. iii. 13, 'This one thing I do;' that is, that we may become better christians every day. Next to that, other things must be regarded in their order, and place, and according to their weight. In the general, use time well. If it be short, do not make it shorter by your negligence and improvident mispending of it. A thing that is hired for a while, it is a loss to us if it be not used and employed; as a horse that is bargained for if he be kept idle, or money taken up at interest. So it is with time lent us by God for a while; we pay dear for it if we use it not, and improve it not for God. It is good to see what advantage we make of time daily. One could say when he heard the clock strike, Now I have another hour to answer for. Many of the heathens pressed a review at night, *τὴ παρῃ;* Wherein have I transgressed? Seneca, *quotidie apud me causam dico*, it was his practice still to arraign himself, What vice have I resisted? what disease of the mind have I cured? *qua parte melior e?* wherein art thou bettered and improved? In the story of the creation God reviewed every day's work, and saw that it was good. Surely these or such like should be our night questions, What have I done to-day? what advantage have I made of time that I may not lose it? what glory have I brought to God? what good have I done to others? wherein have I profited my own soul?

9. The slight price we are to give for time. You part with nothing but what is better lost than kept; with a little ease of the flesh, vain pleasure which passeth away as the wind, a little worldly profit, which at death will be of no use to thee. Now these are of no worth in comparison of time.

[1.] The ease of the flesh, what is that to the gain of the soul? Pains must be endured first or last. Now what a foolish thing is it to go to hell to save a little labour? to live in endless pains, because we are loath to put ourselves to the trouble of prayer and other holy duties for a little while, or to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? The body was made for labour, and is the more active the more it is exercised, as wells are the sweeter for draining, whereas its necessities and infirmities are multiplied and increased by a fond indulgence. Therefore do not spare the body and stand upon a little ease. God's children have given up their bodies to him as well as their souls: Rom. vi. 13, 'But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;' and Rom. xii. 1, 'That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' And what is given up to him must be used for him, though it be with some pain and self-denial; and the least part of self-denial is the labour of holy duties. It is said, Dan. iii. 28, they 'yielded their bodies that they might not worship any god but their own God.' If they yielded their bodies to such cruel tortures, are we not ashamed to complain of the toil and burden of a little service done to God, which also carrieth its own comfort and solace along with it? A christian, whether he looketh backward or forward, upward or downward, seeth no reason to insist upon the ease of the body. Look backward; what pains did Christ endure in his body! his face spit upon and buffeted, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns. In his life he neglected his refreshings, when hungry, to do good to souls, John iv.; and shall we be so delicate and tender of the body as not to endure a little pains for God's sake? If we look forward, this earthly tabernacle must be dissolved, 2 Cor. v. 1, a poor clay house, that must be crumbled into dust; it is better to be worn out with labour, than eaten out with rust. Ay! but look a little further; it shall be raised up a glorious body, and then it will be no grief of heart to us that we have lived fruitfully and painfully in the exercise of godliness, and been much in fasting and prayer; though you have deprived your bodies of some delight and pleasure which others take, then you shall find all recompensed to you. Those knees which were made hard like camels' hoofs (as it was said of James) by kneeling in your daily addresses to God in prayer shall then be a testimony of your diligence; those spirits that have wasted in godly exercises shall then be recompensed to you; and when those that lived in vanity, ease, and idleness, shall be full of horror and amazement, you shall lift up your heads with joy. Look upward; we hope this body shall be one day in heaven; there is the place of your rest from all that is painful and troublesome: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them.' Then the body shall become an ever-



lasting temple, wherein the soul fully sanctified shall ever dwell, and never part more; then we shall not begrudge the labours of the body in prayer, preaching, and other holy duties. Look downward; the bodies and souls of the wicked are cast into hell fire: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' There are pains immediately inflicted on the body, not only such as result from the agonies and horrors of the soul. Well, then, better take pains for a while than to endure pains for evermore, to be held in the bands of duty than in chains of darkness.

[2.] Vain pleasures and delights, which spend time immeasurably. All pleasure should be used with fear and caution, lest it strengthen the sensual inclination, and enchant our minds and hearts, and divert us from God and heaven. Now this vain pleasure and delight is inconsiderable in itself, for it is short, gone as soon as come, like a wind it passeth away. If it leave anything behind it, it is a sting in the conscience, for obeying appetite before reason, or spending our time so unprofitably for a thing of nought: Prov. xiv. 13, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness;' and therefore elsewhere it is compared to the 'crackling of thorns under the pot,' Eccles. vii. 6, that maketh a great blaze and a loud noise, none of the most pleasing, but soon vanisheth. So all their songs, jests, frothy discourses, mimical and antic practices, they do not good, rather much hurt. Therefore to be so caught with empty and light pleasures, so as to neglect the glory of God and saving our own souls, is extreme madness. It is misbecoming a man, an active creature, and made for business: Eccles. ii. 2, 'I said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it?' What solid good or considerable profit bringeth it to us? A man maketh himself a brute when he giveth his heart to it and maketh it the business of his life. Tully saith he is unworthy the name of a man *qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate*, who would spend one day in pleasure. Surely much more it misbecometh a christian: James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' For a christian, that looketh for everlasting pleasures in another world, to set his heart upon the poor pitiful delights and joys of this earth, and to live delicately and luxuriously, and to forget God and heaven, and all serious preparation for the world to come, what is it but to defy his christianity, and live as a carnal worldling, to seek his joys in the place of his exile and banishment? yea, to carry himself like a beast appointed for the shambles, rather than to carry himself as an heir of glory? and therefore to part with this vain mirth should not be tedious. Part with it we must, because it spendeth much time, and diverts the heart from better cares; and it should be no grievous thing, considering how unreasonable it is to frolic it in the midst of so many sins and dangers.

[3.] Worldly profits and emoluments, which at death will be of no use to us: Mat. xvi. 26, 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' The soul may be lost by sins of omission as well as commission. If our worldly projects have distracted our minds, and bereft us of our time, oh, how grievous will the

thought and remembrance of it be at the hour of death ! Job xxvii. 8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul ?' Jer. xvii. 11, 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' Therefore, though we overlook some worldly conveniences, yet if we gain time, we have made a good purchase. Why should we be greedy of wealth and prodigal of time ? All the wealth in the world will not purchase one day longer, nor procure a little respite for us, when God requireth our souls from us. And in the other world it is of no use to us ; our works follow us there, but our wealth doth not : Eccles. v. 15, 'As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry in his hand.' We must go out of the world, and shall survive the present estate, and then all that we have heaped up cannot stand us in that other world. Oh, how much better is it then to redeem the time, to mind such things as will be serviceable to us in the country to which we are a-going, and to seek after these things here below with weanedness and moderation, that we may have time and a heart for better things ! 1 Cor. vii. 29-31, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.'

10. The necessity should quicken us, because there are many things which are apt to steal away and engross our time, and therefore must be redeemed ; as—

[1.] Sloth and idleness. Some are loath to be put to the trouble of any serious work ; though their time hangeth on their hands, and they know not what to do with themselves or with their time, yet they spend it in roving thoughts or trivial actions, being unfit for aught that is serious ; they lie open to temptations, especially the temptation of mispending time. Now it is no hard bargain to exchange a sin for a duty, to part with our sloth and do our proper work. Sloth is an averseness from labour, through a carnal love of ease or indulgence to the flesh ; and if this labour be to be exercised about our most necessary duties, it is the more culpable. Sluggishness is so contrary to reason (and by the sentiment of nature a slothful servant is an evil servant), that the most backward cannot allow themselves in their negligent and careless course of living without some pretences and excuses. One is, they desire better things ; but 'the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing,' Prov. xiii. 4. And why ? Another proverb will tell you that 'his hands refuse to labour,' Prov. xxi. 25. Another is, there is some difficulty they must grapple with : Prov. xx. 4, 'The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold ; therefore shall he beg in harvest.' Ploughing is when the season begins to grow wet and cold : 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way ; I shall be slain in the street,' Prov. xxii. 13. In those countries lions raged in the night ; sometimes they came into the towns and villages to seek their prey : Prov. xv. 19, 'The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns,



but the way of the righteous is plain.' Every little opposition and difficulty will put him by a duty; he goes about it as if all the way were strewed with thorns, and he multiplies his fears and difficulties. Something is out of the way when he should do anything for God and the good of others. So Prov. xxvi. 16, 'The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.' Though they do nothing for God and eternal life, yet they seem to be wise, carp at the diligence of others, and excuse their own negligence; and withdrawing themselves from labour and danger, accuse others as fools and melancholy persons, and so condemn what they should imitate, though others be as wise as the counsellors of princes. Seven was their number in the oriental countries: Esther i. 14, 'The seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom.' Now the soul being thus disposed, time must needs run on, and our great work left undone.

[2.] Vain and sinful pleasures and carnal sports. These rob us of our time, not only as there is a great deal spent in them, but chiefly as they taint our hearts, that we never truly mind the glory of God nor eternal happiness: Isa. v. 12, 'And the harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.' While men excessively abound in all manner of delights, nothing is to be seen or heard among them that is savoury or serious; they give themselves wholly to a dissolute or voluptuous course of life. These cannot mind the improvement of time. Their principle is, Isa. xxii. 13, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Whatever they do, they are still losing time, for they look only to present things, and have no design of living with God in heaven: Job xxi. 13, 14, 'They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Their carnal mirth excludeth all sense of the need of God or care of the world to come; for this little vanishing pleasure they hazard eternal joys: Luke xii. 19, 'And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' They are only taken up with sensitive or sinful joys, and so post on the faster to their eternal misery, till one moment puts an end to all their joy for ever. Now since these vain delights tempt us to slight God, and religion, and eternal life, and the preparations necessary, we must be the more careful.

[3.] Worldly distractions; these divert our cares and thoughts from the most necessary things. Our worldly business ought to be minded with a due regulation and subordination to our great end. It is our work given us to do, but usually men are excessive: Ps. cxxvii. 2, 'They rise early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of sorrows.' They rack their minds, and waste their spirits, and make this their main care, as if time were only given them, and they were made for nothing else, but to get wealth and heap up treasure to themselves. No; things indifferent must give way to things absolutely necessary, things less necessary to things more necessary, and all to things absolutely necessary: Mat. vi. 33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;'

Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful.' And therefore great things must be most minded by us, other things in a due proportion.

[4.] Vain company; they steal a jewel from us they can never restore, which is our precious time. There are some sinful companions we are never likely to be the better for; and if they be not likely to be the better for us, we must not be familiar with them, but shun them: Ps. cxix. 115, 'Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.' There are others who entertain us with idle chatting and censuring: 1 Tim. v. 13, 'And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things they ought not;' that is, they fall into loose discourse, censuring and meddling with other folk's matters. Now in all these cases a christian should not be careful to please others to the wrong of his own soul. *Non nascitur aliis qui mortuus est sibi.* He that is to die for himself, and give account for himself, is not born to humour others with the loss and prejudice of his great affairs. In the general the rule is, that we should spend time in nothing that must be repented of; and all talk that is impertinent and inconsistent with our duty is of that nature.

Secondly, Why we must redeem the season.

1. Because all things are beautiful in their season. It is said, Ps. i. 3, that the good man 'is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.' Now fruit in its season is a carriage answerable to all providences: Mat. ix. 15, 'And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.' Ps. lvi. 3, 'At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' When fears are apt to surprise us, we are to establish our hearts with the fear of God. So Rom. xii. 15, 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;' an allusion to the two gates of the temple, *Quarum una erat sponсорum, altera lugentium, utrisque convenientia dicebant Levitæ*—Grotius.

2. Because the season may soon slip out of our hands: Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.' Take and seek all occasions of doing good. To take the season relates to the necessities of others; to seek the season relates to our own capacity and ability; both together bind the duty stronger on us. He may die, and you may be discouraged and disabled; and therefore take the present opportunity, while it lasts, to do all the good you can. Suppose it be to relieve others' bodily necessities: Prov. iii. 28, 'Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.' We must not defer a benefit. Some are like hogs, good for nothing till they are dead; they will not part with anything till they are incapable of the use of it any longer. So for exhorting: Heb. iii. 13, 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day.' So for serving public good: Acts xiii. 36, David, 'after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep.' They that mind to do good in the world engage themselves in a warfare, and the loss of our season is no small part of the enemy's conquest.



3. This is wisdom. Some are wise in time, others too late; as the foolish virgins; they saw a necessity of getting oil into their vessels, but it was too late, Mat. xxv. 10. But the godly make much of time before it is lost. Alas! we have no security of the next day but our own word; and he hath nothing to secure him that hath only his own overweening presumptions to secure him: 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,' Luke xii. 20. The greatest folly is seen in the loss of time and season. It is ill being taken unprovided.

4. The foresight and provision of the creatures may shame us. God will not only teach careless men by his prophets and messengers, but by his creatures. There is a great deal of morality lieth hid in the bosom of nature if we had the skill to find it out. In this business of redeeming the time we are sent to the pismire: Prov. vi. 6-8, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' This little creature is as it were put into the pulpit to preach to man; as Christ elsewhere sendeth us to the fowls and lilies to learn how to trust God for food and clothing. The creatures are as it were in a glass, wherein we may not only see God's glory, but our own folly and sin. Some would have thought that there had been no use of the ant but to devour grain, and that we might have been better without such a creature than with it. If it serves for no other use, this is enough, that it is an emblem of diligence, sagacity, and industry. This wisdom is merely natural instinct, which should shame us men who are endowed with reason on purpose to provide for the time to come, especially for eternity. Solomon heighteneth this sagacity and industry, because the ant 'hath no guide, overseer, or ruler,' to show her her work, or to require it of her, or to punish her for idleness; no *ἐργοδιώκτης*. There is a God to look after us, and call us to an account, and to punish us in case of negligence; and yet in summer we do not provide for winter, and are not wise to redeem the time. So elsewhere God shameth us by the fowls of heaven: Jer. viii. 7, 'Yea, the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.' They duly observe the seasons of the year for coming and going, but man doth not observe the seasons of grace or the time of wrath. In things that do more nearly concern us, we come short of the unreasonable creatures.

5. Most of the calamities of the world come for not observing and improving the season: Eccles. viii. 6, 'To every purpose there is time and judgment; therefore the misery of man is great upon him;' that is, everything hath its proper season, upon which the happy success of their undertakings doth depend, and if this be let slip, the misery of man is great upon him. The Lord vouchsafeth his blessing to actions done in his time and after his manner; therefore we need to take the season.

*Use 1.* Is reproof of several sorts of men.

1. Of them that wilfully spend their time vainly, either in doing nothing, or doing what they should not, or in doing evil: *aut nihil, aut aliud, aut male agenda.*

[1.] In doing nothing. Time and life was given us for some end and purpose; every man hath his work wherein to glorify God. Men are not made to fill up the number of things in the world, as the stones; nor to grow bulky, and increase in stature, as plants and trees; nor to taste bodily pleasures without remorse, as the beasts. We have higher faculties of reason and conscience to foresee the end and choose the means, and diligently by those means to pursue after the end. Our end is to glorify God and enjoy him; the means are the duties of our general and particular callings, and we must be diligent in both. An idle man is a burden to himself, a prey to Satan, and a grief to the Spirit of God. A burden to himself, for he knoweth not what to do with time; in the morning he saith, Would God it were evening. A prey to Satan; if the devil findeth them at leisure, he will be sure to employ them: standing pools are apt to putrefy; birds are not taken in their flight, but when they pitch and rest. They are a grief to the Spirit of God; idle men quench the vigour of nature, and therefore are incapable of the quickenings of grace. In short, the world was never made to be a hive for drones; every one hath his employment for public good. To spend the whole life in eating, drinking, and 'sporting is beastly or brutish: 'Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness,' were the sins of Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 49. Every member of the body hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole. All have not the same office; that would make a confusion; but all have their use, and are, according to their gifts and talents, diligently to employ themselves. They are unprofitable burdens of the earth that live idle and to no use, as if their souls were only given them as salt to keep their bodies from stinking.

[2.] Those that do *aliud agere*, that is, do somewhat, but not what they should do, spend their whole time in hunting after the profits of the world, or in making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. No; there are better things to mind. Everything is lost that helpeth us not towards heaven, much more that which hindereth our progress thither. That is our first care, the glorifying God and saving our souls: Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom;' that is, heavenly wisdom.

[3.] *Male agendo*, in doing evil, or serving the lusts of the flesh. That time is lost indeed, for then you lose your souls and your time too, and do the devil's work in God's time: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.'

2. It reproveth them that delay their conversion and return to God; as those invited to the marriage-supper did not deny, but delay, Mat. xxii. They do not say, *Non placet, sed non vacat*—I am not at leisure. Oh, it is dangerous to neglect the season. If you did thoroughly see the danger, you would see you cannot make too much haste. This great necessity that is upon us admitteth no deliberation, and therefore we should take the next opportunity. To promise ourselves a more convenient season hereafter is to be liberal at another's cost, which yet you are not sure of. The holy and heavenly life is compared to a journey; he is a foolish traveller that sets forth at night, and beginneth



his journey when the sun is setting. It is set forth by a race often ; who ever heard of a race that was but a stride long ? By a warfare ; now who would expect to conquer when himself is weakest and his enemy strongest ? Yet nothing more usual than delays and put offs ; one is full of business, and when he hath a little mastered it, then he will be for a devout retirement, and will think of saving his soul : 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father,' said he in the Gospel, Luke ix. 59. Alas ! when you are more leavened with a worldly spirit, religion will find little entrance. Some their youthful heats are not yet over and spent, and they think something is to be allowed to them ; but when those youthful lusts and sensual inclinations are confirmed by long custom, how will you break the force of them ? The misery is, God always cometh out of season to a carnal heart, or in the sinner's reckoning. We even say to him, as the devil did to Christ, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time ?' Mat. viii. 29.

3. Reproof to fallen believers, who do not take the next advantage of recovering themselves by repentance. The longer sin continueth unmortified or unpardoned, the more dangerous is your case. A candle, as soon as the flame is blown out, sucketh light and is re-enkindled ; but when it is grown cold and stiff, it requireth more ado. Peter's repentance presently overtook his sin : Mat. xxvi. 75, 'He went out and wept bitterly.' 'Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath, neither give place to the devil,' Eph. iv. 26, 27. It is true of reconciliation with God. If a man were unclean, he was to wash his clothes before evening. God would not let Adam sleep in his sins, but came to him in the cool of the day. If we are fallen, we should not lie in the dirt : Jer. viii. 4, 'Thus saith the Lord, Shall they fall, and not arise ? Shall he turn away, and not return ?' Let not your commerce and traffic with heaven lie dead. Sin maketh you fly from God, and we hang off from him. A backward heart must be urged and pricked forward.

4. It reproveth those that withstand the special seasons of grace, when God's arms are most open to receive us. Some scriptures seem to assert a special season, that may not be had at other times : Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek the Lord while he may be found ; call ye upon him while he is near ;' Ps. xxxii. 6, 'For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found ;' Isa. xlix. 8, 'In an acceptable time have I heard thee ; in the day of salvation I have helped thee ;' Luke xix. 42, 'If thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes.' When this day is past, we are in danger of eternal ruin.

But to state this matter.

(1.) The time in which God will pardon and accept those that repent is as long as life ; for whenever men repent, iniquity shall not be their ruin. Turn and live, sin and die, are truths that will always hold good.

(2.) The times while powerful means of grace are continued do not always last. Persons have their day and nations their day. He may take away his word from a people that reject it, and offer them his grace no more : Acts xiii. 46, 'But seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the gentiles.'

(3.) When God's motions are more powerful, these God may suspend upon our disobedience: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' God at some times moveth the heart more strongly towards conversion than at other times. Now this time should not be lost, the day of patience, the day of offers, the day of motions. The day of patience is as long as life lasteth; the day of offers, while means and motions are continued. It is dangerous to slight either. Present time is best.

*Use 2.* Is to press you to redeem the time. All our time is due to God; and were it not for bodily necessities, it were to be spent in his immediate service. But this is the life of heaven, not of earth. A good proportion must be given to him; yea, in a sense our all. Common actions must be sacred in their intention and aim: Isa. xxiii. 18, 'And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.' The particular time we are to spend in the immediate service of God is not expressly determined, because God trusts love, and expecteth much from a willing people, who are not wont to dispute away their duties, but practise them; and because he would leave something to the conduct of the Spirit, and a due latitude to men's several conditions and occasions. And though there be not express directions, yet injunctions are very large and comprehensive: 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing.' We have worthy patterns: Ps. cxix. 147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried;' and ver. 164, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee.' Therefore you must do what will stand with love, with your manifold necessities, and spiritual welfare and advantage, and the special seasons God offereth in his providence. For means—

1. Be sure the body be not a clog to the soul: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of the world.' When you gratify the body, you make way for a gross neglect of the soul.

2. Love to God, that keepeth the heart liberal and open upon all occasions of duty.

3. The heavenly mind. Are you in good earnest? Would you go to heaven, and dwell with God for ever? The children of this world are wise in the course of their affairs, what time to redeem, and what advantages to take. If you were more heavenly-minded, you would be wiser in your affairs for a heavenly life.

## SERMON XXI.

*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.—EPH. v. 17.*

THESE words are an inference from the whole discourse, begun ver. 8; more especially from the two last exhortations, to 'walk circumspectly,' and 'redeem the time;' 'wherefore be ye not unwise,' &c. Observe here—



1. The note of inference, 'Wherefore.'

2. The duty inferred, which is propounded—(1.) Negatively, 'Be ye not unwise;' (2.) Positively, 'But understanding what the will of the Lord is.'

1. The note of inference, 'Wherefore,' that we may not be deceived as the ignorant, nor delay as the slothful; neither mistake our duty, nor fail in the readiness of our obedience, but observe what God requireth, that we may do it diligently and while there is time.

2. The duty inferred is propounded negatively, 'Be ye not unwise.' Be ye not *ἄφρονες*, foolish, simple, who are deceived with every fair appearance. Positively, 'But understanding what the will of the Lord is.' *Συνιέντες* is more than *γινώσκοντες*, for *συνιέναι* is attentively to weigh: Mat. xiii. 19, *καὶ μὴ συνιέντος*, 'and understandeth it not.' Beza, *Non advertit animum*; we must not barely understand our duty, but prudently and practically consider of what moment it is to our eternal woe or welfare, either to omit or perform it.

*Doct.* That wisdom and a good understanding of the will of God is necessary to accurate walking or ready obedience.

I. Before I give you the reasons, let me state the point as it lieth in the text.

1. That every man that hath a tender conscience would be accurate and exact in his obedience to God, not contenting himself with a slight tincture of christianity, but looking into every creek and turning of it, that he may in no point be lacking and defective in his duty. Now this cannot be without much wisdom and knowledge; therefore here, when the apostle presseth them to 'walk circumspectly,' he presently addeth, 'Not as fools, but as wise.' And again, 'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' So elsewhere: Col. i. 9, 10, 'That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' So Col. iv. 12, 'That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' They are growing to a fuller maturity both in christian knowledge and practice.

2. We have no sure rule to walk by but the will of God. It is his favour we seek as our life, his displeasure which we fear as death to us; into his presence we hope at last to come, and his wrath we shun as our greatest misery; therefore it is his will we must obey, or we are not safe: 1 Peter iv. 2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;' Rom. xii. 2, 'And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' Many walk according to the course of this world: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.' Others live by sense and passion and carnal reason, and enslave that wisdom that they have to their sensual passions and desires; but he that would approve himself to God must be careful that he liveth according to the will of God, for if he doth what God will have him to do, he is safe.

3. This will is revealed to us in his word. There our duty and our happiness is clearly stated : Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.' The light of nature discovereth somewhat of our duty, but very imperfectly with respect to the light of christianity, which discovereth our lost estate by nature, the way of deliverance by a redeemer, that obedience in its full extent whereby we express our gratitude or thankfulness to God. There is a great deal of wisdom in the law part of the word : Deut. iv. 6, 'Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom, and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' Much more in the gospel part : Eph. i. 8, 'Wherein he hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence.'

4. This word we need thoroughly to understand, otherwise how shall we know our duty ? Prov. xix. 2, 'Also that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good ; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.' That proverb discovereth the two great causes of men's miscarriage, ignorance and precipitancy ; either they understand not their rule, or else mind it not, but run on as they are led by their headlong passions ; therefore we have two opposite precepts : Prov. iv. 25, 26, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee ;' 'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.' They that would walk circumspectly had need have their eyes in their head, and to mind their business, if they would not slip, or stumble, and dash their foot against a stone. Still examine your actions by the word of God.

5. This understanding must not be idle, but reduced to use and practice. The scripture sheweth that this should be our end in seeking knowledge : Isa. ii. 3, 'And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ;' Ps. cxix. 34, 'Give me understanding, and I will keep thy law ; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.' Knowledge without practice layeth us open to the greater judgment : Luke xii. 47, 48, 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' Both are beaten ; but according to the degree of knowledge, our crimes receive an aggravation of sin and punishment ; and the more light and grace God bestoweth upon any, the greater duty he requireth from them. Again, John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' A readiness to serve God in God's way bringeth us soonest to a knowledge of God's will. Therefore our aim in getting understanding of God's word is not that we may jangle about questions, but direct and order our conversations. The word was not given us to try the acuteness of our wits in disputing, but the readiness of our obedience in practising.

6. This reducing what we know to practice is our wisdom. Knowledge is never right but when wisdom goeth along with it : Prov. viii. 12, 'I wisdom dwell with prudence.' Besides a knowledge of divine mysteries, there must be wisdom and prudence to rule and order our



actions and practices, and to guide us in our respective duties to God and man. The two great diseases of our understandings are ignorance and folly; ignorance, because we know not our proper remedy; and folly, because we know not how to apply it.

[1.] There is a cold and naked knowledge of divine things, called by the apostle, 'A form of knowledge,' Rom. ii. 20; which is threefold—

(1.) A grammatical and memorative knowledge, such as children have, that are taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, such as God, Christ, heaven, hell, sin, righteousness. These rather rehearse the words than they can be said to know and believe the things spoken by them; they say after others, but do not believe or mind the things wherein they are instructed: Luke i. 4, 'That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.'

(2.) Another degree above this is dogmatical and opinionative knowledge, when men's memories are not only planted with the seeds of knowledge, but they exercise a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, so far as to form their opinions to the orthodoxy of the times they live in; but yet 'wisdom entereth not into the heart,' Prov. ii. 10. This maketh men disputers of this world, rather than serious practisers of godliness. They have a religion to talk of, but not to live by. It may be they can more accurately discourse of divine things than a serious christian; as a vintner may have his cellar better stored than a nobleman, but he hath it for sale, not for use.

(3.) There is yet a further degree of speculative knowledge; that is, when men have some kind of touch upon the heart, but it is too slender and insufficient to settle the power of religion in their hearts, or to maintain it against the opposition of lusts within or temptations without. So some are enlightened, and taste the good word: Heb. vi. 4, 5, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' And they may escape the pollutions of the world 'through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Peter ii. 20. It is hard to conceive how such practical and important truths should be understood or considered without some touch upon the heart, which may affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation.

[2.] There is a practical and saving knowledge, when we know God so as to love, serve, and obey him. This is not only knowledge, but wisdom, such a knowledge as is 'able to make us wise to salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15; such a knowledge as ordereth means to their proper end, which is the glory of God and the salvation of our souls. This knowledge which teacheth us to walk circumspectly, and that reneweth the heart, is our wisdom: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;' Jer. xxii. 16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' All other knowledge to this is but learned folly rather than true wisdom.

7. This wisdom is sometimes spoken of as a gift, and sometimes as a duty; it is both.

[1.] This wisdom is spoken of as a gift: Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' It is God's resolved gift to the elect: Isa. xxxii. 4, 'The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge.' It is God alone that can make such as were heady and inconsiderate to be better advised, and to understand his will. This is spoken of as a gift of God.

[2.] In many other places it is spoken of as a duty: Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' With respect to this double notion we are sometimes bidden to pray, and 'cry and lift up our voice for understanding,' Prov. ii. 3; and again, ver. 4, 'To seek for her as for silver, and search for her as for hid treasures.' This must be our constant and earnest request to God. And then we must use all holy means, and take all occasions of getting and increasing this wisdom. God giveth it, and we must labour for it; for God will never give it to the lazy soul. And we must labour for it as men that dig in the mines for treasure; it lieth not on the surface, nor is it a few general and obvious truths, which will give us this holy wisdom and understanding. It doth not belong to preachers only to dig in the mines of knowledge, but all christians; they should not content themselves to see with other men's eyes, but judge for themselves. It is a matter of much skill to be a thorough christian.

II. The reasons why much wisdom and a good understanding is required of christians.

1. That they may resemble God, and discover his perfections to the world. The notions which we have of God are, that he is wise, powerful, and good. Now all these christians are to express, for they are 'to show forth his virtues,' 1 Peter ii. 9; and among others, that he is wise, by whose counsel we are guided in our circumspect walking. The honour of God lieth at stake; if we behave ourselves foolishly, we dishonour him in the world. If wisdom be a part of God's image, the new creature must represent it to the world as well as other things. And therefore we should not be fools, but wise, and show ourselves to be light in the Lord.

2. That there may be a due impression of his word upon us, which is all wisdom; and if we understand it and improve it, it must needs make us wise also; for the impression is according to the nature of the seal; and so the new creature must needs be the wisest creature on this side heaven; for—

[1.] He fixeth his right end, which is the glorifying and enjoying of God, whilst others disquiet themselves about a vain show: Ps. xxxix. 6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain.' Whilst they labour, cark, and turmoil themselves to get together a few poor transitory enjoyments, in which there is neither durable possession nor solid satisfaction. The spiritually wise man is seeking after God and eternal life, beyond which he cannot aspire.

[2.] He chooseth apt and proper means, which is the way God hath prescribed him to walk in: Deut. iv. 6, 'Keep therefore, and do



them, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

[3.] He doth not dally with religion, but thoroughly sets himself to observe and obey the dictates and directions of it: Mat. vii. 24, 'I will liken him to a wise builder.' Well, then, the impression must needs be according to the seal and stamp. Where there is a saving knowledge of divine mysteries, and diligence to order our actions accordingly, there must needs be true wisdom and prudence. Some excel in it more than others, but all are wise to salvation.

3. To make us thorough christians, or for our own direction, that we may keep to our rule in all things: Ps. cxix. 33, 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.' The narrow way of obedience is hardly found, and hardly kept, and easily mistaken, especially when prejudices, lusts, and interests are apt to pervert and blind us. Therefore this knowledge and wisdom doth caution us against sins and snares, that we be not corrupted and ensnared by them: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.' Knowledge doth not only discover sin, but fortify our resolutions against it: 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' As it discovereth sin, it is good to have something in our hearts to check it: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' Truths in the word rise up in dislike. As it fortifieth our resolutions: I am in God's way; I look for all my acceptance and reward from him: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' This lifteth us above fears and flatteries, that we are neither discouraged nor enticed. So for duties; it urgeth us to perform them: Prov. vi. 22, 'When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.' It is good to have a bosom monitor, and something that may plead God's interest in our own hearts. In all cases it instructeth us, and mindeth us of all particular duties, to avoid snares and temptations.

4. Not only to direct us in the general duty of christians, but to make us useful in our particular relations. We are all bound to get knowledge. There are public and private relations; public, as that of magistrates: Ps. ii. 10, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.' It is a critical thing many times to understand Christ's interest, and make their own veil to it; so that a king needeth much wisdom. When Solomon asked wisdom, 'the thing pleased the Lord,' 1 Kings iii. 10. Ministers and guides of the church: Mal. ii. 7, 'For the priest's lips should keep knowledge.' These are the church's storehouse, therefore they need to be well furnished with all kind of knowledge, speculative and experimental, that they may draw it forth upon all occasions. Private, as husbands, that they may carry on the duties of the family: 1 Peter iii. 7, 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge;' that is, they are to labour for much prudence and wisdom, that they may be able to know their own duty and instruct others: 1 Cor. xiv. 35, 'And if

they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; and that they may not govern things in their houses, according to passion and will, but God's word. Parents, that they may instruct their children; for they are 'to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. vi. 4. Private christians, that they may comfort and build up each other in their most holy faith: Rom. xv. 14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another;' that we may not be ciphers in converse, and our coming together may not be like a dumb show, without speaking any savoury or comfortable and edifying word to one another. Therefore be not unwise.

5. The great danger of ignorance, or the evils that come from the want of spiritual wisdom.

[1.] To ourselves. Our worship is but a fond superstition, a blind devotion to an unknown god, a mere guess directed by custom and some devout aims: John iv. 22, 'Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.' Our zeal is but a wild fury: Rom. x. 2, 'For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' A dead fire, *fervidus, non lucidus*; like a blind horse full of mettle, but ever and anon stumbling.

[2.] To others. There is no preventing trouble in the church or scandals to the world if we have not spiritual wisdom and understanding. Whom doth Satan make use of as his instruments but those in whom there is weakness of mind and strength of passions? these are unstable: Eph. iv. 14, 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness; whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' These through pride and unskilfulness breed divisions: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.'

6. The incredible delight and peace it begets in our souls.

[1.] The bare knowledge of God's will is very delightful, and yieldeth much more pleasure to the mind than an epicure can find in his most exquisite sensual enjoyments. It is incredible what contentment an anxious soul hath in the finding out of any truth whereof he was doubtful before, and it cannot be conceived till we feel it: Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, 'My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste. So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul; when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward.' There is a comparison between the oblectation of the mind and the pleasure of bodily taste. Nothing can be so sweet to the palate as understanding is to the soul, especially when we ourselves have searched it and found it out, when we see a truth with our own eyes. He doth not speak there of that sweetness which the conscience hath in the feeling of God's love, nor of the delight of the heart when it findeth liberty in the ways of God, but of the satisfaction and oblectation of the mind and understanding when truth is so fully cleared up that there remaineth no doubt or scruple about it.

[2.] The peace which accompanieth it. Many times there is little account made of God's will in the world, and it falleth out so that he



that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow: Eccles. i. 18, 'For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;' and when he is forced for conscience' sake to differ from others, he meeteth with much trouble, for ignorance is furious. Yet this is a satisfaction to him, that he knoweth this is pleasing to God, and so hath more comfort in the knowledge of a hated truth than worldly men in all the advantages which a false way giveth them: Prov. iii. 31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways: for the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.' That is rendered as a reason why they should not envy wicked men; they know they are in a way pleasing to God, and this supporteth them in all their troubles. Now this satisfaction we cannot have, unless we have the thorough knowledge of the truth we profess, or the holy ways of God we are engaged in. Therefore we need to get a distinct clear knowledge of the whole will of God revealed in his word.

7. The properties of this knowledge and wisdom show the necessity of it. All knowledge is to be prized, for it is man's excellency above the beasts; but especially divine knowledge, which far transcendeth all the wisdom of the world.

[1.] Because it is employed about the highest things, to know God's nature and will, what he is, and how he is to be enjoyed. Alas! what mean things do most of the world employ their time and wit about, in comparison of a poor christian! To know God, though not comprehensively, yet satisfyingly and savingly: Ps. cxxxix. 6, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it;' 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.' What are all the profound speculations of the world to this? 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' The angels, that much exceeded us in understanding, desire to pry into these things, a speculation that is fit for their best thoughts.

[2.] These things are most useful and profitable: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Curious knowledge bringeth more pain than pleasure, but profitable knowledge should be most prized by us; as to know how to be reconciled to God, what is pleasing to him, or to conquer sin, and escape damnation, and obtain eternal life; these are the matters about which we should most busy ourselves, and employ our understandings; for what doth more deeply concern us than these things?

*Use 1.* Is of reproof to divers sorts of persons who live in ignorance, or countenance ignorance upon several pretences.

1. That it belongeth not to them to dig in the mines of knowledge; they leave that to clerks and men of learning; as if it were not a common duty lying upon private christians, as well as those whose office doth particularly engage them to study the scriptures: Heb. viii. 11, 'They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.' All need to learn how to be saved; and therefore, if you know not how to live unto God, how to conquer sin, and how to escape damnation, what will become of you? The apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.' A man in ignorance is never like to

hit his way, nor can he know whether he be in or out, whether he has escaped his great danger, or shall be accepted in the judgment. While you are ignorant, the devil may cheat you, and do what he lists with you.

2. Others have a little general and traditional knowledge of the religion commonly professed among us, and talk of it by rote after others, but generally look no further than the outside of it; they neither know the reasons upon which the certainty of this religion is grounded, nor the tenor of it, what it doth require at their hands, especially as to the practical and vital truths, that do more nearly concern the vigour and power of godliness, as the work and power of the Holy Ghost in regenerating and converting men to God, or the life of faith, or the difference between the state of sin and grace. As Nicodemus: John iii. 4, 'How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' These scorn to be taxed of ignorance, though they know little but certain rituals and externals of the religion commonly practised among us. Therefore press them to more acquaintance with religion and the life of faith and holiness, they scorn you, and all that you can offer in that kind; for it is ever true, that carnal men savour not the things of the Spirit, but they are carnal under a christian or pagan profession.

3. Some confine their knowledge to a few obvious truths, and for other things they leave it to preachers more accurately to search after the mind of God, and content themselves to see with other men's eyes. But if knowledge be to be confined to a few truths, why hath God given men so copious and large a rule, and revealed so many things as helps to our faith and practice? It is a kind of censuring the scripture, as if the greatest part of these sacred writings were not necessary. Certainly it is a matter of great skill to be a thorough christian. Our knowledge should cost us pains, as well as our obedience. A little slight superficial knowledge will not fully subdue the heart to God. Though some truths are fundamental, yet every piece and parcel of truth hath its use and place; and the knowledge of it is not only for delight, but safety. Many say that fundamentals are but few; believe them, and live well, and you shall be saved. True, yet the accessory truths do much conduce, both to the belief of fundamentals, and to quicken our practice of necessary duties. He were a foolish builder that should only be careful to lay a good foundation, and never mind roof or windows, lights or doors; no, nor should be able to discern the coming of those that should untile the house, or let in such a continual dropping as would at length founder the building, and bring it to ruin. Besides, though it be not absolutely necessary to salvation that a christian should know every truth, yet he must never do anything against the truth, and he should not be willingly ignorant of any truth. To be willingly ignorant of lesser things may be damnable: 2 Peter iii. 5, 'For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old.' Now men are willingly ignorant, not only when they refuse the truth when it is plainly cleared up to them, out of a wilful obstinacy, but also when they will not use the means out of laziness and sloth. *Crassa negligentia dolus est.*



Men will not search when they have a mind to hate and condemn anything which unquestionably concerns God's interest in the world.

4. Some think ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that men leave off to be good when they grow more knowing. Surely that is the fault of the men, not of the knowledge; for all divine truths befriend sanctification. Others say the world is too wise to be governed; and since every one came to know religion, and dispute of it, it breedeth factions. But this is unjust also; it were well if the world were too wise to be brought under a kingdom of darkness. If men will impose on the church of God things which they ought not, they have cause to impute the divisions to their own tyranny and usurpation, not to the scriptures or the study of the scriptures; as if this principle of an easy implicit faith, to believe as the church believeth, were more effectual to produce true piety and goodness than the knowledge of God's will. This is to set men above God, as if they by their testimony and impositions did more safely secure the interest of religion in the world than God hath done by a book indited by his own Spirit, or as if that were dangerous to be commonly read or meditated upon. In short, God's children are children of light, and the children of light must not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. None will deprive others of this privilege but those that have no mind to it themselves.

*Use 2.* Is to press us to get this knowledge and understanding of God's will. The apostle speaketh to children of light; and none of us know so much but we may know more.

1. Labour to get a more full knowledge of heavenly mysteries, especially of those which are necessary to salvation, not excluding other truths which secure the necessary things; for we must not always be children, and keep to our milk: Heb. v. 12, 13, 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.' Besides, there are *maculæ et vulnera intellectus*, the spots and the wounds of the understanding. Dangerous are the wounds, but errors as spots much hinder our edification and growth in grace; for all grace is either light or strength, and strength is increased by the increase of light: 2 Peter i. 2, 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.'

2. Get a more clear knowledge. Fulness relateth to the object, or matters known; clearness to the subject or faculty knowing. A christian should see further into those truths which he doth already know: Hosea vi. 3, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' Moses' first request was, 'Tell me thy name;' his second, 'Show me thy glory.' The godly are unsatisfied: Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' To know a truth as we ought to know it: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3, 'And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of him.' New light is not a finding out new truths, but a seeing further into the same truths. Our growth in knowledge

is rather intensive, as to degrees than extensive as to objects ; not knowing new truths but when old principles are improved : Prov. iv. 18, ' But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day ; ' Ps. cxix. 18, ' Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. ' David doth not pray that God would make another law, but that God would give him a clearer understanding of this.

3. Get a more certain knowledge, or more confirmed knowledge in the truth : Acts ii. 36, ' Let the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ; ' John xvii. 8, ' For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ' Not by hearsay and tradition, but solid evidence : John iv. 42, ' Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. '

4. Get a more distinct knowledge. Truths are best known in their frame and dependence. A confused knowledge is always unsatisfactory, it is not *cognitio quietativa*, till we see how one truth agreeth with another, as the curtains of the tabernacle were fastened by loops ; till we are able to ' compare things spiritual with spiritual, ' 1 Cor. ii. 13, or know things according to the analogy of faith : Rom. xii. 3, ' For, I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. ' Every truth must be known in its order and place, otherwise we have but a confused notion of things, as the blind man saw men walking like trees.

5. Get a more experimental knowledge. Most of christianity is not only to be believed, but felt : 1 John v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. ' We must have not only a sight, but a taste : 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, ' As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby ; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. ' And feeling : Phil. iii. 10, ' That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. ' Otherwise it is but a form of knowledge. Experience is the inward seal and confirmation of truth : John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth ; ' John viii. 32, ' And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. '

6. Get a more practical knowledge. Knowledge is for use, not an idle speculation. As a gallant and a physician cometh into a garden, one looketh upon the colour and beauty, the other upon the virtue and use of herbs and flowers : 2 Peter i. 8, ' For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ ; ' 1 John ii. 4, ' He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ' A practical christian is more ready to serve and please God every day.



## SERMON XXII.

*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess ; but be filled with the Spirit.*—EPH. v. 18.

HERE is a new direction to the children of light, who are bound to walk accurately and circumspectly, and to redeem time to glorify God and save their own souls. One great impediment of a watchful and diligent life is drunkenness and intemperance ; therefore those who would walk accurately and redeem time must be sober and temperate in all things : ‘ Be not drunk with wine,’ &c.

In the words we have—(1.) A dehortation, ‘ Be not drunk with wine.’ (2.) A reason, ‘ Wherein there is excess.’ (3.) The opposite duty, ‘ But be filled with the Spirit.’

1. The dehortation. In which—

[1.] The matter of the sin, ‘ Be not drunk with wine.’ Under the term ‘ wine’ all inebriating and intoxicating drink is comprehended, called in the scripture by the general name of ‘ strong drink ;’ Isa. v. 11, ‘ Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink ; that continue until night, till wine inflame them.’ Meaning thereby, not wine only, but other drinks made of honey, dates, rice, malt, or any other grain that for strength often cometh not short of wine, and may inebriate or make men drunk as well as it ; as the Nazarite was to separate himself from wine and strong drink : Num. vi. 3, ‘ He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, nor vinegar of strong drink ; neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.’ This is the matter of the sin.

[2.] The manner, when made drunk by it. The word importeth sometimes a more liberal use of wine ; as John ii. 10, ‘ When men have well drunk.’ Sometimes an excessive and inordinate use, as here, such as breedeth some distemper. There is implied a lawful use of wine : 1 Tim. v. 23, ‘ Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.’ And the case is shortly stated, Eccles. x. 17, ‘ For strength, and not for drunkenness.’ Vigour, health, and strength, for the duties of our general and particular calling, is to be preserved, but drunkenness is to be avoided.

2. The reason, ‘ Wherein there is excess.’ The word *ἄσωτος* properly signifieth prodigality and riot, as Luke xv. The word for the prodigal is *ἄσωτια* ; and ver. 13, ‘ in riotous living’ is *ἄσώτως* ; and 1 Peter iv. 4, excess of riot, *εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἄσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν* ; what we translate ‘ excess,’ the Vulgar translate ‘ luxury ;’ some translate ‘ dissoluteness,’ which they interpret a wasteful profusion, without any prudence or consideration, joined with all licentiousness, that they take to themselves to abuse God’s creatures.

3. The opposite duty is, ‘ Be ye filled with the Spirit.’ Where by the ‘ Spirit’ is meant the Spirit of God, the author of all grace, who dwelleth in the hearts of the faithful. And by ‘ being filled,’ not an absolute and exact fulness, but a plentiful enjoyment of his grace. Things are said to be filled when they are a-filling ; and though

they be not brimful, yet this is the prevalent principle. Christ only had the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34; others, according to their receptivity, as they are able to receive: they are still a-filling, and are made capable of larger measures of grace. If any ask, Why is this required of us, to be filled with the Spirit? is it in our power to command his influences, and fill ourselves as full as we please?

I answer—We are to use the means, to ask, seek, and knock; and then the rich treasures of grace will be opened to us. The apostle speaketh to children of light; if they do not hinder their own filling by their sensuality or negligence, what can they want? If we obstruct his motions by our carnal practices, or do not improve them by our negligence and folly, the fault is our own. Let us faithfully use the means to obtain this benefit, and we shall not want it. So that it lieth much upon us to be filled with the Spirit.

*Doct.* That all sincere christians should be careful not to be filled with wine, but with the Spirit.

I shall consider—(1.) The ἀντίστοιχα, the matters put in opposition one to the other; (2.) The inconsistency of the one with the other; (3.) The reasons why christians are under this obligation.

I. The matters put in opposition to each other, which are both things and actions. The things are ‘wine’ and the ‘Spirit;’ the actions, being ‘drunk with wine,’ and ‘filled with the Spirit.’

First, The things; these two are put in opposition—

1. To check the temptation. The sensual pleasure which men find in wine enticeth them to excess. There are higher pleasures men should be taken up with, namely, the joy of faith and a delight in holiness. It seemeth hard to pleasant natures to abjure all accustomed delights; but the temptation will be less powerful if we can persuade them that their delight is not abrogated, but preferred; transplanted from Egypt, that it may grow in Canaan. It is but change the object, or turn the affection into a spiritual channel, and you shall have delight enough: James v. 13, ‘Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.’ So Eph. v. 3, 4, ‘But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.’ All men seek causes of mirth and cheerfulness: you shall not lose your cheerfulness, you need not quench your thirst at the dead water of the next ditch, if you will take a little pains to go a little further, and seek out the fountain of living water. Indeed it is the Spirit must direct and incline you, but this is the way of your cure. There is a double error we are guilty of in disposing our affections; we mistake in the object, and we offend in the measure. If the first error were well cured, the second would be soon prevented. Seek a right object for your oblectation and delight, and if that be esteemed according to its worth, you would the better be weaned from other things; as whoredom would cease by the choice and love of a beautiful and lawful wife.

2. To show the difference between the holy societies or meetings of the faithful, and the dissolute feasts of the heathens in honour of their idols. In these they came away filled with wine, but in christian



assemblies with the Spirit; and that is the reason why idolatry is mentioned when these excesses are forbidden: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;' because these excessive feasts were frequent at the solemn worship of their idols. Carnal rejoicing maketh a loud noise, and vents itself in a carnal manner; for as idolatry is a work of the flesh, so is drunkenness. But now in christian meetings the rejoicing is spiritual, and vented in psalms and thanksgiving and fervent prayers, and they were feasted with God's promises. The devil betimes sought to bring in intemperance into the christian meetings by the love-feasts, which some abused to riot and luxury; and therefore the apostle seeks to obviate this abuse.

3. Because of the analogy between wine and the Spirit; they are often proposed in scripture as correspondent, or as having some likeness in their operations; as wine cheereth and exhilarateth the spirits: Ps. civ. 15, 'It maketh glad the heart of man;' so the Spirit filleth the soul, and exhilarateth it. Only in this fulness there is no excess: Cant. v. 1, 'Drink abundantly, O beloved.' And in this mirth there is no dissoluteness; when we are filled with the Spirit, it is no corruptive joy, but perfective, such as strengtheneth the heart: Neh. viii. 10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' There are some common effects between wine and the Spirit, as appeareth by the sacrament, where we are said to 'drink into one Spirit,' 1 Cor. xii. 13, where the outward element is wine, because the copious plentiful measure of the Spirit doth work like effects spiritually which wine taken in large draughts doth bodily; as it filleth the soul with joy and gladness, Cant. i. 4, and looseneth the tongue in the praises of God: Eph. v. 19, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' The children of God, when they have gotten a full draught of the Spirit, express their joy in hymns and praises to God. Again that there is a correspondency appeareth by the scoffing of those that were unacquainted with the motions of the Spirit; as the mockers said, 'These men are full of new wine,' Acts ii. 13, and Peter's answer, ver. 15, 'These are not drunk with wine, as you suppose.' So Hannah's praying fervently was judged by Eli to be drunkenness, 1 Sam. i. 14. All fervent motions of the Spirit seem to standers-by like the effects of wine; yea, some that are inflamed with wine think they are inspired, and mistake the fumes of wine for the motions of the Spirit. Now for these reasons the apostle puts them together.

Secondly, The actions, 'Being drunk with wine,' and 'Filled with the Spirit.' Both must be explained.

1. The action on the one side, 'Being drunk with wine.' Two things must be spoken to—(1.) The nature of the sin; (2.) The heinousness of it.

[1.] For the nature of it; it is immoderate or inordinate drinking; it is excessive when more is taken than natural necessity calleth for, or sober and christian cheerfulness doth allow. Necessity is a part of our measure, for God denieth us nothing that is necessary for us. In some cases lust multiplieth our necessities, but that is our disease. When the apostle saith, 'Drink a little wine for thy manifold infirmities,'

1 Tim. v. 23, he means to cure them, not to cause them. But yet a more liberal use of the creature is allowed beyond bare necessity, for delight and cheerfulness ; but then grace must interpose, which judgeth by two rules—the light of nature and scripture.

(1.) The light of nature judgeth what is fit for a man as a man. So he consists of a body and a soul. If the body be oppressed, it is a kind of self-murder. So it is said, Hosea vii. 5, ‘In the day of our king, the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine.’ Intemperance and immoderate drinking doth not only misspend time, and abuse the good creatures of God, but filleth the body with crudities and diseases ; which is carefully to be thought of by them that have given up their bodies to God, and would not have sin reign in their mortal bodies, as all christians have done : Rom. vi. 12, 13, ‘Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.’ But then for the soul, when men disturb their reason, or disable it, and hinder it from its proper office ; certainly when there is some gross defect in reason, a man turneth himself into a beast. And therefore the light of nature will condemn gross and brutish sensuality : Jude 10, ‘But these speak evil of those things which they know not ; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.’

(2.) The light of scripture doth direct us also in eating and drinking ; for a christian is to be guided and ruled by God’s word even in his common actions, not by his own appetite ; for he is to ‘put a knife to his throat,’ Prov. xxiii. 2 ; nor the pleasure of others : Hosea vii. 5, ‘The princes made him sick with bottles of wine.’ Our appetite is not our rule, for that may transport us easily to inordinances in this kind. We have but two common parents, Adam and Noah ; one the begetter, and the other the repairer of mankind ; and both miscarried by appetite, the one by eating, the other by drinking. Nor the desire of others : heathens thought it a crime to force any to drink : Esther i. 8, ‘And the drinking was according to law, none did compel ; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure.’ But what doth the scripture add above this ? That considereth two things—(1.) The expense of time ; (2.) Our great end, the glory of God.

(1st.) The expense of time, that we do not make it a business : Isa. v. 11, ‘Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink ; they continue until night, till wine inflame them.’ They made a business of it, passing and lavishing away the time in swilling and drinking which was allotted to labour and more serious and necessary employments ; they spend day and night in revelling and drinking, as if they were out of their element till they be at it, or cannot give over when once they set to it. Now when men make a set business of drinking, though they be not grossly distempered, yet they are drunkards before God.

(2d.) The end, which is the glory of God. This should be our end in eating and drinking : 1 Cor. x. 31, ‘Whether therefore ye eat or



drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' This is to be considered; if we be unfitted for the service of God, though there be no gross defect of reason follow (as some men are of a stout body and a strong brain), yet these the scripture excepteth not from drunkenness: Isa. v. 22, 'Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.' They can take in much, and go away with it; which is rather the commendation of a tun, than a man. Though the natural use of reason be not taken away, yet the heart is unfitted for God. Our Lord would have us consider that, Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;' when you are forgetful of God, and unmindful of better things.

This sin may be considered either as to the act or habit.

(1st.) As to the act of drunkenness. It is possible a good man may fall into it by surprise; as Noah, Gen. ix. 21, 'And he drank of the wine, and was drunken.'

(2d.) As to the habit. It is said, 'Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 10. Nothing good and honest can be presumed of them.

[2.] The heinousness of this sin of drinking excessively, beyond that measure which fitteth men both in soul and body for the service of God and the duties of their callings. That is set forth in the word *ἀσωτία*; it is prodigality and wasteful profusion.

(1.) Of the blessings of God's providence, or the good things given us to sweeten our pilgrimage and encourage our service; they are perverted to God's dishonour, which is foul ingratitude. How many waste their estates hereby! for it is said, Prov. xxiii. 21, 'The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty;' Prov. xxi. 17, 'He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.' Which is said not only because of the costly expense which is necessary to feed and supply these vices, but because they divert the mind from more serious employments, whereby as instruments of God's providence we may provide for ourselves and those that belong to us.

(2.) Of our fame, because it exposeth us to ridiculous things, and so to the contempt of others: Prov. xx. 1, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' So it is said, Hab. ii. 16, 'Thou art filled with shame for glory; drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered.' It forfeits a man's credit and reputation, because it uncovereth a man's nakedness, and so maketh him contemptible.

(3.) Of their bodies, as it destroyeth their health, and filleth them with diseases: Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, 'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine.' He reckoneth up six evils that come of drunkenness: First, One in general, that is woe, meaning thereby all kinds of hurt and damage; he hath woe, he cannot suppress it in his bosom, but must needs cry out, O woe is me! Secondly, 'Who hath sorrow?' meaning thereby trouble of conscience, or a bitter and sad reflection upon the inconveniences of drunkenness, as poverty, beggary, an ill fame, and a diseased body. Thirdly, 'Who

hath contentions ?' that is, quarrels which arise upon a light occasion, and many times have a bloody issue. Fourthly, 'Who hath babblings ?' that is, scurrilous talk, for men are ready to pour out all kind of froth and folly in their distemper. Fifthly, 'Who hath wounds without cause ?' this is the fruit of the contentions spoken of before ; he hath stripes or wounds given him by those whom he abuseth, or by dangerous falls from stairs, precipices, &c. Sixthly, The last evil is 'redness of eyes,' meaning thereby the weakening and deforming the most noble sense we have by too great an effusion of humours, and the plenty of fiery fumes thence exhaling, which causeth the soreness and redness of eyes. This is the lot of them that drink too plentifully, or frequently, or delicately. Therefore afterwards it is said, ver. 32, 'At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' Whilst men are pouring down their throats plenty of choice liquor, they dream of nothing but pleasure, but at length they are bitten with many and sore diseases.

(4.) Of their souls, which may be considered with respect to their natural, spiritual, or eternal estate. As to their natural estate, it taketh away the wit and judgment : Hosea iv. 11, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart.' Brisk wits have been dulled by intemperance. As to their spiritual estate, it disposeth to all sins, especially to uncleanness. *Venter mero æstiuans facile despumat in libidinem*, saith Jerome ; Whilst men overflow, they easily cast over the foam and froth of lust. And Solomon telleth us, Prov. xxiii. 33, 'Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.' Men's lusts are inflamed, and then they grow impudent, and their wantonness lays them open to shame. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, yet committed incest with his own daughters in the mountains, being first made drunk by them. And besides, it bringeth on slavery and security upon the soul. Slavery, for this inordinancy is imperious and tyrannous ; it is hard to reduce men from this brutish excess, and their very distemper becometh another nature to them : Deut. xxix. 19, 'They add drunkenness to thirst.' It is spoken there proverbially for continuance in sin ; you cannot reclaim them. Solomon representeth the drunkard as resolved to seek after the wine again when he hath felt the inconveniency of it : Prov. xxiii. 35, 'They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick ; they have beaten me, and I felt it not : when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again.' So for security ; it bringeth on such a stupidity upon the conscience that nothing will awaken them : Prov. xxiii 34, 'Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.' And as to their eternal estate, the soul is lost for ever without repentance.

2. The action on the other side is, to be 'filled with the Spirit ;' where we see that we should not content ourselves with a small measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but endeavour to be filled with them, ever getting the habits increased : 2 Peter iii. 18, 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;' and actuated : Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out ;' that is, that we may have lively thoughts of God's love, and keep up a holy joy,



zeal, and fervency in his service. A little grace seemeth enough to a lazy heart; if they be but a little tinctured with religion, they think it a great matter; few are deeply baptized into the spirit of it. Men have quickly done in religion, and think everything enough in grace. We love perfection and excellency in all other things, but in christianity we regard it not. But alas!—

[1.] A little grace is as none as to comfort, for small things cannot be discerned. We love God so little, that we cannot tell whether we love him at all: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' There is Christ's joy, and their joy; they are delightful objects to Christ, and Christ to them; he may still rejoice in them as his disciples and people, and they may rejoice in him as their Saviour. There is no way to get this joy but by being filled with the Spirit.

[2.] A little grace is as none in a temptation: Mark iv. 40, 'Why are you so fearful? how is it that you have no faith?' compared with Mat. viii. 26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' It could not do its office, and support them in the storm. And therefore it is a shame to us that we have so little love to God, or fear of his name, or trust in his mercy, or earnest expectation and hope of eternal life.

[3.] A little grace will not break the force of the sensual inclination, so that our minds will hanker after our carnal delights. The duty, being 'filled with the Spirit,' is a cure of the distemper, being 'drunk with wine, wherein is excess.' 'We will remember thy love more than wine,' Cant. i. 4. So much as our hearts feel of the one, so far are they weaned from the other. These better things put us out of relish with those base dreggy delights. It is but a taste of the Spirit that is lost: Heb. vi. 4–6, 'For it is impossible for those that were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they fall away,' &c. The apostle speaketh of 'tasting.' A large draught of experience would confirm the soul: Luke viii. 14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' Though men have good sentiments of religion, yet through the cares and pleasures of the world they could bring nothing to perfection. The carnal gust is too strong for the spiritual, and therefore it choked it, and kept it under. But what is it to be filled with the Spirit? The phrase is taken two ways—(1.) Either to be filled with the gifts of the Spirit; or (2.) With the graces of the Spirit.

(1.) The gifts of the Spirit: Acts ii. 4, 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;' Acts iv. 31, 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.' There was something of an extraordinary gift in that. And this is not excluded here; for in those days they could on a sudden utter a psalm or hymn of praise to God, ver. 19.

(2.) To be filled with the graces of the Spirit. And here we must consider his three offices—as he is our guide, sanctifier, and comforter.

(1st.) As our guide, he leadeth us into all truth, that is, into the know-

ledge and belief of the gospel. So they that understand and believe these mysteries are said to be full of the Holy Ghost; as, for instance, Stephen, Acts vi. 5, is said to be 'a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost;' And Paul: Acts ix. 17, 'The Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost;' meaning, be endowed with the knowledge of the gospel, as their *φωτισμός*, their illumination, was at their baptism. Christ had revealed himself to him from heaven, which begat great consternation; and Ananias cometh as a means to enlighten him with the light of the Holy Ghost, that he might be more fully acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel.

(2d.) As our sanctifier. So they are filled with the Spirit who have the fruits of the Spirit in great abundance, who are filled with all 'goodness, righteousness, and truth,' ver. 9; that is, that have these things in a rich and plentiful measure. More particularly—(1.) Who have a powerful and prevalent principle in them to keep them from sin: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body.' Where there is a weak and faint resistance, there is but little of the Spirit. (2.) Who are strongly inclined to God, and excited and assisted by grace to do what he commandeth. Thus Barnabas 'was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts xi. 24; that is, mightily affected with the glory of God and the good of souls. So proportionable common christians, when their hearts are filled with zeal and devotion: Rom. xii. 11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;' when a mighty spirit of faith and love to God cometh upon them, that they boldly appear for God: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We, having the same spirit of faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;' not in a bashful inconsiderate way, but openly, hazarding all their interests.

(3d.) As comforter; and so when we are filled with peace and joy in believing, this is by the power of the Holy Ghost: Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' The impressions of the comforting Spirit do either concern our present interest or our future hopes. Our present interest, when a comfortable sense of God's love aboundeth in us, when he puts gladness in our hearts by lifting up the light of his countenance upon us. So it is said, Acts xiii. 52, 'The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.' They did so esteem the grace of the gospel, that though they suffered persecution for it, yet their hearts were filled with joy. Our future hopes, that also is matter of joy and delight to us; and the more we find of this, the more we are filled with the Holy Ghost: Acts vii. 55, Stephen 'being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' He was full of the Holy Ghost before, but then his faith and confidence in God was enlarged, even to some kind of ecstatic motion. As a good soldier, that hath always a habit of courage, in the danger of battle it is quickened in him, his valour is whetted, and a great ardency cometh upon him; so holy men, that have always the spirit of faith, upon necessary occasions they are elevated beyond the line of their ordinary strength, and feel a kind of anticipation of



heavenly joys, as if they were already in heaven's blessed place, and in the midst of the glory of the world to come.

II. The inconsistency of the one with the other ; to be drunk with wine is inconsistent with being filled with the Spirit.

1. They that are filled by the one are acted by a contrary principle. The apostle Jude telleth us of 'sensual persons, not having the Spirit,' Jude 19. They whom the apostle speaketh of there were such as separated themselves from the rest of the faithful, and therefore pretended to a greater degree of light, and more familiarity and acquaintance with the Spirit of God, than other christians did. But the apostle disproveth their pretence and presumptions, because they were sensual, or took an inordinate liberty in the ways of the flesh, more particularly the way of fleshly lusting. Drunkenness is reckoned amongst the fruits of the flesh, Gal. v. 21 ; and temperance, whereby our fleshly appetite is kept within bounds, is among the fruits of the Spirit, ver. 23. Therefore light and darkness cannot be more contrary than these two things are ; the one implieth the most brutish of carnal pleasures, the other the highest of spiritual delights. Two contrary principles cannot stand together in any prevalent degree ; now here is an opposite principle in predominancy, the loose spirit of licentiousness and drunkenness, opposite to the holy Spirit of God.

2. This contrary principle hath such an influence on them, that the spirit of the gospel hath no place in them.

[1.] Their sight is blinded : 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them ;' 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ;' 2 Peter i. 9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off.' They are acute in pleasing their appetites, but the mind can rise no higher ; they either believe not, or mind not things to come so as to quicken them to any care about them.

[2.] The delight and relish of the soul is corrupted : Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things ;' Luke xii. 19, 'And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' No relish for higher things.

[3.] Their strength is weakened, that they cannot resist any temptation. They are slaves to their brutish affections : 2 Peter ii. 19, 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.'

Use 1. See the folly of the exchange of the joys of the Holy Ghost for the sordid pleasures of excess. Will you cheat yourselves in this brutish excess, and grieve the Spirit of God ? How miserable is it to part with the birthright for brutish pleasures ! Heb. xii. 16, 'Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' Shall a slight pleasure prevail more than the joys of heaven ? You hazard name, health, soul and all, for a contemptible delight, which is not valuable to a reasonable man.

2. Because it is an imperious lust, you must offer violence to it, and

bridle your appetite, as David poured out the waters of Bethlehem before the Lord.

3. Never hope to join these irreconcilable things, fulness of wine and fulness of the Spirit; as many put on a pretence of the Spirit the better to cover and hide their licentiousness; though they live not in open scandalous sensuality, yet they serve the flesh in a more cleanly manner: these are never brought under the power of the gospel, nor made partakers of the Spirit thereof.

### SERMON XXIII.

*But be filled with the Spirit.*—EPH. v. 18.

DOCT. That all sincere christians should be careful to be filled, not with wine, but with the Spirit.

Here let me open—(1.) What this Spirit is that we must be filled with; (2.) Show the reasons why we are bound to be filled with the Spirit; (3.) The means how we come to be filled with the Spirit.

I. What this Spirit is, or what is meant by it? I answer—Either the person of the Holy Ghost, or some created gift, called ‘the divine nature,’ or ‘the new creature;’ the word signifieth both. Sometimes it is taken for the person of the Holy Ghost himself, with whom we are in covenant, as well as with the Father and the Son: Mat. xxviii. 19, ‘Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ As we take God for our God, that is, for our proper Lord and chief good, and Christ for our Redeemer and Saviour, so the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Sometimes it is taken for the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that divine nature which is begotten in us: John iii. 6, ‘That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ The first word ‘Spirit’ noteth the author of grace, the second the effect, the renewed heart. We have both the fruit and the tree, the fountain and the stream; the one cannot be without the other, not the graces without the Spirit, for they are his production; and the Spirit himself cannot be said to dwell in any but where he produceth these graces; for his presence anywhere is to be determined by some eminent effect, and this residence and dwelling by a constant effect, *per modum habitus permanentis, non per modum actionis transeuntis*. Therefore he cannot be said to dwell in any heart but where he produceth these graces. The Spirit doth first renew and sanctify the souls of the elect, and then abide there to keep afoot God’s interest in them, and maintain it against all opposition within and without, more and more overcoming their sweetest and dearest sins, and quickening them to all their duties, assisting them in the exercise of grace, and increasing it by all fit and holy means. Well, then—

1. We have the Holy Ghost himself, called the Spirit of God: 1 Cor. vi. 11, ‘In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;’ and the Spirit of Christ: Gal. iv. 6, ‘God hath sent the



Spirit of his Son into our hearts;’ Rom. viii. 9, ‘Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’ We cannot live independently without influence from God, for all life is originally in him, and from him conveyed to us, and that by his Spirit. All that God doth in creation is done by the Spirit: Job xxvi. 13, ‘By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens:’ Ps. civ. 30, ‘Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created.’ So in a way of grace, which is called a ‘new creation,’ we have all from his Spirit: 2 Cor. v. 17, 18, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;’ Titus iii. 5, 6, ‘But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.’ Now this creature, once produced, cannot subsist without the continual presence of the Spirit, there being so much opposition within and without.

[1.] Within there is an enmity to the divine and heavenly life: Gal. v. 17, ‘For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.’ So blind are our minds, so depraved are our hearts, so strong are our lusts, which evils remain in such a measure in the regenerate, that there is but a cold resistance of sin, a faint and dull desire, and a sluggish pursuit after spiritual and heavenly things, that unless the Lord by his Spirit do still open the eyes of our minds, and strengthen the inclination of our hearts, and reconcile our alienated and estranged affections to himself, our faith will be dead, our love to him will soon grow cold, and our obedience fail. In short, there is still within us such addictedness to sin, such a love to the present world, such indulgence to the flesh, that no less agent can keep alive the work of God in our hearts.

[2.] Without there is the world, which presents tempting objects: 2 Tim. iv. 10, ‘For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.’ Or assaults us with violence for our love to God, and loyalty to Christ: 2 Tim. iii. 12, ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.’ And the devil earnestly joineth his suggestions with both sort of temptations: 1 Peter v. 8, 9, ‘Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.’ By this the flesh is strangely stirred, and we should soon be overcome, were we not assisted by the powerful and all-conquering Spirit of Christ: 1 John iv. 4, ‘Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.’

2. The word ‘spirit’ signifieth also the new new nature, or that gracious frame of heart which is produced in us by the Holy Ghost. This may be considered as working towards God or towards men.

[1.] As the new nature standeth affected to God, so the spirit of the gospel is described by the apostle: 2 Tim. i. 7, ‘God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and a sound mind.’ Negatively, ‘not a spirit of fear;’ it is a spirit above the hopes and fears of

the world : 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' One part is put for both. They that look for no great matters in the world have not much either to fear or hope for, and are not greatly moved with anything that doth befall them in the present life. But then positively it is called 'a spirit of love, power, and a sound mind;' where (1.) by 'a spirit of a sound mind' is meant a true knowledge of God in Christ, and a firm belief of the life to come, or a being sound in the faith : 2 Tim. i. 13, 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' Two things the gospel discovereth—God in Christ, and the life to come. God in Christ : John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The other great discovery of the gospel is the life to come : 2 Tim. i. 10, 'And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' Now the Spirit revealeth both; both the truth of our redemption by Christ : 1 Cor. xii. 3, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;' that is, own Christ for the true Messiah; and then a clear and firm persuasion of the world to come is wrought in us by the Spirit also : Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Now this giveth us a sound mind. (2.) A 'spirit of love' is a pure and fervent love to God, which doth incline us to seek after him, and delight in him as our portion and happiness. The seeking after God is made the great duty of man; we lost him by the fall, and they that love him cannot live without him : Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' An early and earnest seeking after God is made there an act of love; and so delighting in God is our great duty also; as Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart;' Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' Now this is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, for love is of God : 1 John iv. 7, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' Love is of God, not only as the original pattern, but the original cause : 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.' The Spirit keepeth our hearts fixed towards God, and in a readiness and willingness to do what is pleasing to him. (3.) A 'spirit of power,' and that is hope, and doth enable us to carry on our duty, whatever temptations we have to the contrary. Surely it is a mighty power which doth enable us to deny present delights, and overcome the terrors of sense, that we may be more at liberty for God and heavenly things; for this hope produces two effects—

(1.) Fortitude and resolution to encounter any difficulties we meet with in our passage to heaven : 2 Cor. iv. 16–18, 'For this cause we



faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

(2.) Sobriety and contempt of the world, which is a great part of our strength also: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' And is joined with hope: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' This enableth us to overcome those appetites and desires by which the rest of the world are mastered and captivated, and our resolutions for God and heaven are thereby fortified and strengthened in us. Well, then, this is the spirit we should be filled withal, faith in Christ, love to God, and the hope of the world to come; which three effects do answer the nature of God, whom we apprehend under the notions of wisdom, goodness, and power. To his wisdom there answereth the spirit of a sound mind, to his goodness the spirit of love, and the spirit of power to the power of God; so that by these graces we are made partakers of the divine nature, and these suit with the word of God, the means by which God worketh these graces of the Spirit in us; which is sometimes represented by light, because the highest wisdom is there revealed, and the way of salvation sufficiently taught: 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'Thou hast known the holy scriptures, that are able to make thee wise to salvation;' and sometimes called the 'power of God,' Rom. i. 16; and also the 'good word of God,' Heb. vi. 5; and the good knowledge of God. And so that man is sufficiently furnished for the kingdom of heaven, and all the duties thereof, whose mind is enlightened to know God in Christ Jesus, and heart inclined to love God, and live to him; and who hath chosen the blessedness of the next world for his portion, and in the meantime liveth in the joyful hopes and foresight of it. This man hath the true spirit of the gospel.

[2.] This spirit fits and frames us for our duty to man. That we have, Eph. v. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, and truth;' that is, the Spirit that God hath sent among us by the preaching of the gospel doth bring forth and produce in us all kindness, justice, and fidelity. There is not a more benign and gentle thing than the gospel spirit, nor anything that doth more fit us to live peaceably and usefully in human society. The first property is 'goodness;' and it suiteth with the author, for it is said, Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Thy Spirit is good.' The Spirit of God is a spirit of love, delighting to do good to all; and all his motions tend to make men good and useful to others; therefore it is said, Gal. v. 22, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith;' all these respect our duty to man. The second is 'righteousness,' or justice in all our dealings, giving every one his due, whether inferiors, superiors, or equals. A mighty spirit of righteousness it breedeth in the world, and maketh it reign in the hearts of those whom he possesseth; and therefore the kingdom of the

Messiah is so famous for righteousness: Ps. xlv. 7, 'Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' The third is, 'truth,' or fidelity; for this Spirit is the spirit of truth, and the holiness which he worketh is true holiness, and nothing so contrary to it as hypocrisy, lying, and dissimulation: Eph. iv. 24, 25, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.' Nothing more opposite to the gospel spirit than guile and treacherous craftiness, wiles, and deceit.

II. The reasons why christians are so strictly bound to be filled with the Spirit.

1. That we may answer the great and rich preparations of grace which the infinite love of God hath made for us by the merit of Christ and the promises of the gospel. The merit of Christ, that is at the bottom of it. It is said, Titus iii. 5, 6, 'And the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' If we neglect the benefits in part or in whole, we slight the price. His intent was that we might have abundance of his Spirit. It is compared to rain; we have not only a few heat-drops of grace, but a plentiful shower, that as barren land we might be made more fruitful to God: Isa. xlv. 3, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.' A metaphor to set forth the abundance and increase of the comforts and graces of the Holy Spirit. It is compared to a living fountain: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;' and ver. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' Not a draught, or a splash, or a dead pond, but a living spring. Now when Christ hath provided so much, for us to be contented with a little is to disvalue his bounty. It is compared to a rich perfume or oil: 1 John ii. 20, 'But ye have an unction from the Holy One.' There was not only a little to be put upon the head of Aaron, but it was to run down to all his garments. Every christian should richly partake of this precious ointment, that was poured out on our head, and so cometh from the Holy One to us. It is compared to a banquet or feast of wine: Cant. v. 1, 'Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.' He alloweth us not only to be barely refreshed, but satisfied to the full. Now for us to be scanty when there is such a large allowance vouchsafed to us, sheweth we have some dislike, or not an appetite prepared.

2. Because of their necessity.

[1.] If it be those that only profess christianity, but are not yet really converted to God, they are in danger to be filled with a worse spirit, if not filled with the Spirit of God. Heathens, that are without the pale of grace, are under the power of the devil: Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' And where the gospel is



preached, it is the same with the carnal : Acts v. 3, 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost?' 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 'And the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.' The heart of man is never empty of one guest or another ; the evil spirit harboureth there where the good spirit is not entertained. Now this is fit to be represented to the regenerate also, because the devil seeketh to re-enter : Eph. iv. 27, 'Neither give place to the devil;' compared with the 30th, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' Satan is dethroned and shut out of the hearts of all true believers, yet he seeketh to recover his old possession and exercise his former tyranny, and doth always wait to surprise us when we give him any advantage ; by grieving the Spirit, or continuing in any known sin, he settleth there. Therefore it concerneth us to be always filled with the Spirit, that Satan may not have room in our hearts, or the least opportunity to enter again, as he will if we indulge our pride, envy, revenge, wrath, sensuality, or any other noisome lust.

[2.] For those that are regenerated, and have received the spirit of the gospel and not of the world, there needeth a further supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ : Phil. i. 19, 'For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' Whereby is meant a further addition of grace wrought in us by the Spirit. The Holy Ghost doth not only plant these graces in us at first, but doth continually increase them, and assist us in the exercise of them.

(1.) He doth increase them. Faith is his gift, and he doth enkindle in us an holy love to God, and raise the heart to the hope of eternal life. This is the inward man, but this inward man must be strengthened : Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner man.' These impressions are weak in us at first, but by the word and prayer and other holy means they are increased. Faith : Luke xvii. 5, 'Lord, increase our faith.' Love : Phil. i. 9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.' Hope : Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' That faith may be more strong, love more fervent, hope more lively. Therefore still we need more of the Spirit.

(2.) He doth assist us in the exercise of these graces : Heb. xiii. 21, 'Make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ.' The regenerating Spirit doth abide in us, and doth renew us more and more, and concurreth to every action. As preservation and providence is to creation, so this work of perfecting is to the first regeneration. As we are first created in Christ to good works, so we are perfected in Christ. Yea, God doth not only give us power, but doth continually co-operate, and work in us and with us, without which co-operation we can do nothing that pleaseth him. He concurreth to every action, and we do not only 'live in the Spirit,' but 'walk in the Spirit,' Gal. v. 25. We are continually quickened by his influence, and enabled to mortify sin or produce the fruits of holiness. Now, then, we should

always be filled with the Spirit, get more of his presence into our hearts, that we may be more enabled for the duties of our heavenly calling.

3. That the glory and excellency of our religion may appear. Those most honour God and Christ who have a more plentiful measure of his Spirit dwelling and working in them, for they make it evident unto the world that they have a power and a presence which the world hath not: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified;' and 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' If a christian live up to his principles, he will show that his religion breedeth the most noble and excellent spirits in the world, a divine spirit. He is above all dangers, because his great interests are secured elsewhere; the heart is enlarged to all that is excellent, and he can do and suffer that which others dare not.

[1.] Take this spirit as it worketh towards God. Negatively, it is not a dastardly spirit or a spirit of fear; the great cause of fear and bondage is taken away, which is sin, for he is reconciled to God. The next cause of fear is removed, which is the wrath of men; he believeth God's particular providence, and that they cannot stir hand or foot without God: Acts iv. 28, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' The third cause of trouble is the hazarding of his worldly comforts; God is able to give him a hundred-fold notwithstanding persecution: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' He hath a serious foresight of the world to come: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' It is enough God hath delivered him from sin and hell. Now how quietly and securely may such a one possess his soul in the midst of all the troubles of the world! Well, then, to be out of the reach of fear is a great privilege; and this spirit is given by Christ to his people for the advancement of his interest in the world. But positively—

(1.) It is a spirit of power. Surely that is a glorious and powerful spirit that can vanquish the most rooted inclination of nature, and can strive against our sensuality, not by a fruitless resistance, but so as to conquer it, and make you go through all conditions with an equal mind; to bear afflictions with that quietness, modesty, and contentedness as is strange to the world, and prosperity with that humbleness and lowliness of mind as if you were destitute of all things: James i. 9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low.' The one, when he hath nothing in the creature, hath all in God; the other, when he hath all things, is



as if he had nothing ; he possesseth as if he possessed not. Thus doth christianity level mountains and exalt valleys, and teach us to bless God for giving and taking, to fear God for his goodness : Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days ;' and love him for his judgments : Isa. xxvi. 8, 'Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee ; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.'

(2.) It is a noble spirit, as it is a spirit of love, sincerely and without self-respect to aim at the glory of God, and do his will. So 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26.

(3.) It is a spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. None go so wisely to work as believers, for they take the surest course to avoid the greatest misery and obtain the greatest happiness : Prov. xv. 24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' While others busy themselves about impertinent vanities or temporary trifles, they busy themselves about the greatest things, the knowledge of God in Christ, and the obtaining of eternal life. It is no low-spirited thing to be godly ; they that judge so are blind, and are seduced by the delusions of the flesh.

[2.] Take this spirit as it worketh towards men : ver. 9, 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.'

(1.) All goodness : 1 Thes. iv. 9, 'Ye are taught of God to love one another.' God's teaching is by impression ; it is a spirit that inclineth us to do good to others. Naturally men's hearts are narrow, minding their own interests ; but a christian is one that taketh it to be his work to do good, and to 'do good to all men, especially to the household of faith,' Gal. vi. 10. This they do with such a facility and easiness, that it is become as another nature to them.

(2.) For righteousness ; the world applaudeth that, it being so necessary for human society. Though the spirit of the gospel be a spirit of courage and fortitude, yet it is not a boisterous zeal without knowledge, nor a bloody zeal without love ; it can suffer wrong, but do none.

(3.) So for truth ; they that live always in the eye of God dare not dissemble with men ; their consciences can have no quiet without simplicity of commerce.

*Object.* But where are such christians to be found ?

*Ans.* (1.) Blessed be God there are such, and many such, though the world will not own it : 1 Peter iv. 6, 'For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.'

(2.) If any be degenerated, it is because they are not filled with the Spirit. It is a lamentable thing that badness, and folly, and feebleness of mind should be so common among those that profess and call themselves christians. (1.) Instead of a spirit of power, how unwilling are they to strive against sin ! how unable to resist temptations ! The devil doth to them what he listeth : 'They are taken captive by him at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. (2.) As to the spirit of love, some are so corrupted with self-love and the love of the world, that they scarce know what it is ; they are cold, dull, and sleepy in all divine matters, because they have so cold a sense of the love of God in Christ. (3.) For the spirit of a sound mind, how injudicious are most

christians! The unction should preserve them, 1 John ii. 20; but they are pliable to every fancy. Surely these have received little of the impress of this true and good religion.

III. The means how we come to be filled with the Spirit. Certainly—

1. It is from God, who is the author of all grace: 2 Cor. v. 18, 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' He meaneth all things which belong to the new creature. None could give us these things but God himself, as appeareth by their nature and use; the subduing our corruptions, the sanctifying our natures, and the conforming us to his holy image; otherwise we should be equally, and as much or more indebted to another agent for our reparation as we are to God for our creation, which is not convenient and agreeable to God's honour. Besides, what needed there so much ado to bring it about? Why should Christ come out of God's bosom if we could renew ourselves?

2. That God doth it through Christ the scripture also witnesseth: Titus iii. 6, 'Which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Whatever the Spirit doth, it is in his name.

3. That this frame of heart is wrought in us by the Spirit or Holy Ghost that came down from heaven, is evident also in scripture. None but this Spirit can give us such holy inclinations to obey God with love and delight. None but this all-conquering Spirit can renew the souls of men, so depraved and enslaved by sensuality.

4. It is given us by the gospel, for that is called 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 2. That is Christ's law, and is stamped upon the heart by the Spirit of God: 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.'

5. The gospel worketh two ways—(1.) Morally; (2.) Powerfully.

[1.] Morally, and in a way of wisdom, as it containeth such precepts and promises, together with the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, as may quicken us to a holy heavenly life, so that it is a fit means to breed this spirit in us. Everything communicateth its own nature to us; a holy doctrine is most fit to sanctify the heart, and a heavenly doctrine to breed a heavenly mind, a spiritual doctrine and institution to convey more of the Spirit to us: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;' 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.'

[2.] Powerfully and effectually; as it is accompanied with the inward operations of the Holy Ghost: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' The gospel doth wonderfully excite the dead and drowsy heart to spiritual and heavenly things, as it worketh ministerially; but the success is of the Spirit, and therein the gospel is made to differ from the law, as it is 'the ministration of the Spirit,' 1 Cor. iii. 8.

6. If any have this power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, it is the mere favour of God; if any want it, it is long of themselves. If they have it, it is God's favour: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us



with the word of truth.' If they want it, it is long of themselves, because of their neglect of the means, and abuse of common grace. Though we cannot bind God to give it us: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,' Rom. ix. 16, yet we are to use the means, or else we shut the door upon ourselves, and show that we have no esteem of this blessed gift if we do not seek after it. The husbandman, when he plougheth and cleareth his ground from thorns and stones, doth no way oblige God to send his rain and sunshine upon it; we do not oblige God to give us his Spirit to renew us, yet it is our duty to use the means. But will God then give me his Spirit? The question concerning man's duty is easily answered; but if the question be of God's acceptance, it is needless to be answered; for this reason,—the use of means is under a command, and I must do my duty whatever cometh of it. God challengeth his people for neglect: Hosea v. 4, 'They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God;' when they will not so much as think of endeavouring or using the means, or doing all they can; they will have God to sanctify them, but they will not stir a foot to help themselves.

7. One of the means is prayer. Christ hath taught us to pray for the Spirit, Luke xi. 1-13. None so fatherly as God; no gift so necessary as the Spirit. When you pray for the Spirit, you pray as children that ask bread. A wanton child, that would tread his bread under his feet, may be denied; but a hungry child will not be mocked. We may crave health, and wealth, and outward prosperity, and receive that answer, Ye know not what ye ask; but when you beg the sanctifying Spirit, you beg what is good and necessary for you; you ask a thing pleasing to the Lord, as Solomon when he prayed for wisdom, 1 Kings iii. 9, 10. One thing more I will add: You say, If I could go to God as a father, I might hope to prevail. I answer—Consider the covenant you are visibly under, and use importunity: Luke xi. 8, 'If he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, *διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν*, because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth;' if not interest, yet importunity may prevail.

8. Sometimes God maketh the offer to you when he knocketh at the door of the heart or stirreth the waters. You doubt whether God will give it when you ask it, but will you take it when God offereth it? Prov. i. 23, 'Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you.' Man is departed from God, but he will not lose us so, and therefore he doth reprove us for our folly; outwardly by the rebukes of his providence, inwardly by the conviction of his Spirit. Now if we refuse or neglect these, we provoke God to forsake us, and give us up to hardness of heart. Surely these smittings should be improved to further our return to God.

9. When you consent to God's covenant, and enter into his peace you have a certain promise. We consent by faith and repentance. As for faith: John vii. 39, 'This he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe in him shall receive.' And for repentance: Acts ii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' A resolved submission to the way of the gospel quali-

fieth you. But you will say, How can we believe and repent first, and receive the Spirit afterwards? *Ans.*—By the converting grace of the Spirit, given as a free lord, we repent and believe; then the Spirit is given to us in a more eminent manner by God as a governor. There is a difference between the spirit of regeneration and the spirit of adoption and perseverance. The spirit of regeneration is tied to no condition, but is dispensed according to the good pleasure of God; it is his resolved gift to the elect: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.’

10. After you are sincerely turned to the Lord, you must obey the Spirit in further subduing the lusts of the flesh, and not take part with the flesh against him: Gal. v. 16, ‘Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;’ but more and more cherish his motions: 1 Peter i. 22, ‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.’ Especially forbear heinous sins, which grieve the Holy Spirit, and if indulged, quench it; and so you cut off all means to increase in holiness.

## SERMON XXIV.

*Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*—EPH. v. 19.

THIS is rendered as a reason why they should be filled with the Spirit, as drunkards are with wine, because it breedeth a spiritual joy, which discovereth itself by two effects—singing psalms and giving thanks. In the one we praise God, in the other we bless God: Heb. xiii. 15, ‘Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.’ Praise relateth to his excellency, giving thanks to his benefits.

I begin with ‘singing psalms.’ As the drunkards had their drunken, wanton, obscene, and filthy songs, by which they tainted each others’ minds, so they that were filled with the Spirit had their spiritual songs, by which they edified one another and glorified God: ‘Speaking to one another,’ &c. In the words there is—

1. A duty prescribed, and that is, ‘singing of psalms.’

2. It is amplified, and set forth in its parts or necessary branches, outward and inward.

[1.] The outward part; there we have—(1.) The subject matter, ‘psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.’ (2.) The actions conversant about it—(1st.) Speaking; (2d.) Singing.

[2.] The inward part, ‘Making melody in your hearts to the Lord.’

*Doct.* That singing of psalms is an ordinance of God’s worship under the gospel.



I. Before I come to prove it, let me observe something out of the words, to fix and state the duty.

First, Observe that singing of psalms is made to be a fruit of being filled with the Spirit. This I gather from the context, 'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs;' and in the parallel place, Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.'

You will say, What need was there to exhort the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, or to have the word of God dwell richly in them for such a service? Any small measure of the Spirit is sufficient, since the matter is provided to our hands, and we have nothing to do but to read it and repeat it. I answer—

(1.) It may refer to the extraordinary gift, when any blessed God in a psalm, to which they were moved by the special operation of the Holy Ghost, inspiring them with matter and words. As Luke i. 41, 42, 'And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;' that is, she was transported and inspired with a prophetic spirit, and therefore brake out into that benediction. And ver. 67, 68, 'And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people,' &c. By the special motion of the Spirit of God coming upon him he sung this hymn. So it is said, Acts x. 44-46, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.'

(2.) Though the faithful be not moved by the Spirit to indite new songs, yet we need the help of the Spirit to sing to the praise of the Lord, and our own edification and consolation. A rich and full portion of the Spirit is needful to perform these duties after a right manner. Look, as there was heretofore a singing by the Spirit, so a praying by the Spirit: 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 'I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.' They did use an extraordinary gift in prayer as well as in singing of psalms. What shall we then conclude? that there should be no praying unless by such an extraordinary impulse or gift? or else that his help is not now necessary for prayer? No such thing. It requireth a rich and full portion of the Spirit, and knowledge of the word, to pray in a right manner; so also to sing psalms. So that as we are still to pray in the spirit, we are still required to sing in the spirit, that our spiritual fervency be not abated, nor our delight in God quenched, and that our hearts be not stolen away in the duty. Surely they are strangers to the life and power of this ordinance that see not a need of his help, or that the word of God should dwell in them richly. To show you this I will examine—(1.)

What need of being filled with the Spirit ; (2.) That the word of God should dwell in us richly ; and—

1. What need of the help of the Spirit ? It signifieth the Holy Ghost or his graces.

[1.] The Holy Ghost. We need the help of the Spirit—

(1.) To purify and cleanse our hearts from vain thoughts and carnal affections. This is a work of the Spirit : 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing you have purified your souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' And this is needful for this duty ; for till our souls be purified and clarified from the dregs of sense, the sweetest things will become loathsome to us : Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.'

(2.) To be excited and quickened by the Spirit, which is another of his operations, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth and giveth life. We are of ourselves dull and backward even in inspired songs ; as Deborah seeth a need of exciting herself : Judges v. 12, 'Awake, awake, Deborah ; awake, awake, utter a song.' That fourfold ingemination showeth there is a deep drowsiness of spirit naturally in us, and therefore she stirreth up herself and others to praise and thanksgiving.

(3.) To direct the intention to a spiritual end, that we may not rest in the works wrought, nor in the carnal delight of the action. That also is God's work : 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' This showeth our need of his grace, so that there is great need of the Spirit to sing psalms with such a frame of heart as such a heavenly piece of worship requireth.

[2.] The graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love.

(1.) Faith, without which this duty will be but a cold dead service, performed without any delight or spiritual refreshment. Believers' hearts are soon filled with pleasure ; every excellency and every act of God findeth them a delightful work whether in creation or providence ; as a son taketh delight in a book wherein his father's royal acts or gestic are recorded. Especially in his redemption by Christ : 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' They know whatsoever is sung or said of God is true, and it is of their God ; and therefore upon all these occasions they vent their joy in God.

(2.) Love : Ps. v. 11, 'But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice ; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them ; let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.' Every mention of God is pleasing to the soul that loveth him. There is somewhat said or sung concerning their best friend, and therefore it doth affect their hearts.

(3.) Hope also contributeth to this joy that is vented in singing : Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' Spiritual delights prepare the soul for heaven. They have so much of God and glory in them that they must needs be excellent helps for our salvation. Carnal pleasures are unwholesome, like



luscious fruits that make us sick ; but these delights of faith, hope, and love are safe and healthful.

2. Let the word of God dwell richly in you. This is the Spirit's instrument, which he maketh use of to produce all his great effects in the souls of men ; his great business is to stamp it on the heart : Rom. vi. 17, ' But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you ; ' and thereby to beget the divine and heavenly nature in us : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. ' And so suiteth us to all the duties that tend to the support or comfort of the new creature. Now the more richly it dwelleth in us, the more we profit by every act of worship, be it prayer, or singing, or hearing. A right disposed mind will not want holy thoughts ; a little thing sets it a-work, because there is something akin in their hearts to all that is represented from without. There is a double advantage when the word dwelleth richly in us—(1.) We understand better what is said or sung : Ps. xlvii. 7, ' Sing ye praises with understanding. ' We cannot praise God or Christ sincerely unless we understand the reasons why we should praise him, or wherein his praise consists. (2.) We praise God more affectionately, for unknown things neither stir our desires nor delight ; but the more we are versed in the scriptures, the more our minds and hearts are apt to be wrought upon, for there occur to us such pregnant and pressing thoughts that the duty cannot pass unprofitably.

Secondly, Observe, that which is to be sung is ' psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. ' This is put in opposition to those carnal and wanton songs wherewith vain persons feed the oblectation of their minds. There are certain songs which God threateneth to turn into lamentation : Amos viii. 10, ' I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation. ' And there are holy songs which are not corruptive, but perfective, and must needs end well.

Some raise a scruple, whether we may or must only sing scripture psalms, as the psalms of David and other prophets.

I answer—We do not forbid other songs, if grave and godly, to be received into the church. Tertullian sheweth that in the primitive times they used this liberty, either scripture psalms, or such as were of a private composure. *Post aquam manualement et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis vel proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.* For scripture psalms, that they only should be used, it may be argued that it is more safe to give that honour to the word of God and the psalms there recorded, for the whole christian world consents to the bible, and that the faithful should be accustomed to the songs therein contained, lest some secret error creep into other composures, which the present age is not aware of, and afterwards is hardly gotten out of the minds of the people, who are accustomed to repeat these things in their worship. And yet, on the other side, it would seem to make more for profit if the shadows of the law were more interpreted in some holy hymns, that do more expressly concern Jesus Christ our mediator. You see, upon special occasions in the old testament, they had some new psalms ; as all the prophets, Moses, David, Isaiah, Habakkuk, not

contented with the old psalms, added new of their own suitable to the present occasion. Now we are acquainted with greater and more wonderful grace by Christ, some new hymns seem necessary in the praise of our Redeemer.

If you reply that the state of the church is different from what it was when God revealed his mind by divinely inspired prophets, I answer—They should not be sung as infallible scripture, but as helps to gospel devotion contained in the scripture; as ordinary gifts succeeded in the place of extraordinary. And as we are not tied to the words of scripture in preaching and praying, so not in singing. Yet upon the whole I shall prove two things—(1.) That scriptural psalms may be sung; (2.) In many respects they are fittest to be sung.

1. That they may be sung. The word of God limiteth not, and we have no reason to make any restraint. Paul saith, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,' not naming any; therefore why not these? Besides, the learned observe, these are the express titles of David's psalms, שׁוֹרִים תְּהִלִּים מְזֻמְרִים, which the Septuagint translate, ψάλλμοι, ὕμνοι, καὶ ὧδαι, 'psalms, hymns, and songs,' seem to recommend to us the book of David's psalms. These afford matter of instruction, comfort, and glory to God; and why should these be passed by, since these are the ends of singing? Besides, Christ himself sung scripture psalms (whose example is our instruction), for it is said, Mat. xxvi. 30, 'And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives,' which probably was one or more of David's psalms; possibly their great hallelujah, began at Ps. cxi., with some following: and seeing in all other things Christ usually observed their passover rites, when it is only said he sung a hymn, what shall we understand by this, but such a hymn as was usual in that age? The evangelists specify no new hymn made for this purpose, who are wont to mention matters of far less moment and concernment. So Acts xvi. 25, 'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sung praises unto God.' It must be such a hymn as they were both acquainted with, or else how could they sing it together?

2. Scripture psalms in most respects are fittest to be used in the church, as being indited by an unerring Spirit, and of a more diffusive concernment than any private composure of a particular person; for it is improbable that any should have such a large heart as the penmen of scripture, who were so powerfully assisted by the Holy Ghost. Nor can it be easily presumed that others can devise better addresses to God by way of praise and thanksgiving than these did. Suppose men of known holiness and integrity should do this, yet a common gift will not command such reverence and affection as an extraordinary and infallible gift. Therefore, since here we are safe, we need the less to seek further. Certainly we should not cavil at the present practice of many of the churches of Christ, who only content themselves with these forms, being instructed out of the gospel how to apply them to our redemption and deliverance by Christ. Austin saith, *Scripturæ tuæ sunt castæ deliciæ meæ*—The holy scriptures are my chaste delights, especially the psalms, which seem to be composed for the use of all persons.

Thirdly, I observe, that it is a duty to be managed both with the



inward and outward man. Both parts are mentioned in the text, for here is 'speaking' and 'singing,' and also 'making melody in the heart.' We are not to speak to God only, but to one another, which cannot be done without the voice. The heart is the principal thing indeed, but the voice is also included.

1. There is the outward part, 'singing,' which is a lawful pleasure, sanctified to a holy use, as helping the soul in spiritual worship. As our bodies are united to our souls, so they act together; and while the sensible part is subordinated to the rational, it is not an impediment, but an help. The outward singing is fitted to elevate the mind and affections to God.

2. There is the inward part, without which the outward singing is but a clamorous noise. Voice without the spirit is but lip labour and lost labour: Isa. xxix. 13, 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me.' At least it profiteth but a little, as all bodily exercise doth: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'For bodily exercise profiteth little.' Therefore the soul must be looked to: Luke i. 46, 47, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' So Ps. lvii. 7, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise;' Ps. xcvi. 4, 'Rejoice and sing praise.' Unless the heart and inward affections be stirring in this duty, the outward act serveth for no purpose. It is heart work, expressed by 'making melody in the heart;' by a holy delight we find in God, more than being taken with outward singing. So it is expressed, Col. iii. 16, by 'singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.' A spiritual gracious frame of heart is required to sing in a right manner.

Fourthly, I observe, that it is a duty required not only to be performed by us alone, but in the assemblies of the faithful. We may sing by ourselves with great comfort: James v. 13, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' As Jerome saith, The christian weaver at his loom may sing David's psalms. We may sing to ourselves for our solace and edification. But the duty pressed here is singing in company and consort with others; singing *ἑαυτοῖς*, to ourselves, is in whole congregations. In the Colossians, chap. iii. 16, it is, 'Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' We are often pressed to this: Ps. cxlix. 1, 2, 'Praise ye the Lord; sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of his saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Sion be joyful in their king;' Ps. xxix. 9, 'And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory;' Ps. xcv. 1-3, 'Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods.' Which place is the more to be regarded, because it describeth the whole gospel worship, as the apostle himself interpreteth it, Heb. iii.; and there it is put among the ordinary duties of the sabbath; solemn prayer, ver. 6, 7; hearing of the word, ver. 8. But first he mentioneth thanksgiving in singing psalms to God with a loud voice; so that you have an account of the usual christian sabbath,

hearing and preaching the word, solemn prayer and thanksgiving. Now to join with a humble and faithful people in the holy communion and in worship and praise, how pleasant is it! All the pleasures of the carnal life are not comparable to it. Surely, if there be anything pleasant in the world to a gracious heart, it is the praises of God that flow from a believing and loving soul, that is full of the sense of the mercy and goodness and excellencies of the Lord. The unanimous conjunction of such souls in praising God in their assemblies is the heaven that we have upon earth.

Fifthly, I observe, it is such a duty here pressed, the great end of which is the glory of God, and the subordinate end our mutual edification; for we are 'to make melody to the Lord,' and 'to sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord;' and we are also 'to speak to one another;' which in the parallel place is explained to be 'teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns,' &c. It is not meant of teaching *from* the psalms, but teaching *in* the psalms; while we are singing, we are teaching one another the tenor of the doctrine of godliness. Therefore if we would judge of the performance of this duty, all means must be measured by their respect unto the end, which is the glory of God. The more of the Spirit we have, the more we are excited to set forth his praises, and thereby quicken our delight and heighten our esteem of God: Ps. civ. 33, 34, 'I will sing unto the Lord as long I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have a being. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Joy beginneth and terminateth the duty. It is from delight in God that singing of psalms is so pleasant to us; and the more we sing, the more we delight in God. So for the other end, spiritual instruction; for we learn thereby to love, fear, and trust in God, and to humble ourselves if we be defective in any of these graces, and cannot speak to God with that confidence which his holy ones have done before us, especially now grace is more liberally dispensed in the new testament.

II. Having thus stated the duty as it is here recommended to us, I shall here prove—(1.) That it is a clear and unquestionable duty; (2.) That it is a delectable duty; (3.) That it is a very profitable duty.

1. It is a clear and unquestionable duty; for the heathens look upon it as a fit worship for their gods to sing hymns of praise to them. If you think that this kind of arguing will not hold concerning the true God, who valueth not compliments, but loveth what is like him, I answer—

[1.] That God will not only be objectively praised, but actively praised, by ascriptions of honour to him: Ps. l. 23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' God counteth it a glory when his people speak good of his name. And it is a means to make us like him, for the impression of what we esteem and love is soon left upon the heart.

[2.] In the old testament it is often called for, and sorted with duties that are of perpetual and immutable obligation. When sacrifice is rejected, prayer and praise is still reserved as the worship which God will still keep up in the church: Ps. l. 13-15, 'Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee;' Ps. c. 2, 'Serve the Lord with glad-



ness; come before his presence with singing.' Now delighting in God is an essential fundamental duty.

[3.] In the new testament we are bidden again to sing psalms, as in the text, and Colossians iii. 16. And we are confirmed therein by the practice of Christ and his apostles: Mat. xxvi. 30, 'And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.' So of Paul and Silas: Acts xvi. 25, 'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises to God.' And the consent of the churches of Christ. Pliny in his letter to Trajan mentioneth the christians' *hymnos antelucanos*, their morning songs, which they sung to Christ as God, as an usual practice in their solemn worship; and Justin Martyr, *ὑμνους καὶ προσευχὰς τῷ Θεῷ ἀναπέμπομεν*, that they did send up hymns and prayers to God; all which proveth it a clear and unquestionable duty.

2. It is a delectable ordinance, that rather tendeth to cheering and refreshing than to toil: Ps. cxlvii. 1, 'Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' There is no part of God's worship that carrieth more motives with it in its own bosom; so no part to which we are more indisposed, or want stirring up. All the motives and encouragements to any work do there concur; it is 'good,' it is 'pleasant,' it is 'comely.' It is good or profitable; for all God's praises are the believer's advantage, and the grounds of his hope and joy. It is pleasant, full of sweet comfort and refreshing. And it is comely, or honourable, to be heralds to proclaim the Lord's glory, or be employed in the work of angels. The angels, according to the opinion of the ancient Hebrews, do every day sing praises to God, and that in the morning, which they gather thence, because the angel said to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh;' which the Targum of Jerusalem thus explaineth, Let me go, for the pillar of the morning ascendeth, and behold the hour approacheth when the angels are to sing. However that be, we are sure that the angels bless God, and do always laud his holy name. Usually when they are sent down to us, they come upon that errand: Luke ii. 13, 14, 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' And upon other occasions we find them blessing God and lauding his holy name; they apprehend more of God's excellency and perfection in himself and in his works than we do, and are more sensible of his benefits than we are. Now if this be the work of angels, the highest and greatest of them, surely it should be more prized by us, or made not such a cold business as usually we make it, but a pleasant work; for the object of it is God, our exceeding joy; and we praise him by a redeemer, 'through whom we have received the atonement,' Rom. v. 11. And the very external act is by singing, the usual vent of our joy.

3. It is a profitable ordinance.

[1.] It subdueth the lusts and passions of the flesh by diversion, or directing us to a purer and safer delight. Much of the strength of the sin lieth in the sensual inclination, or the inordinate love of pleasure. Now if we can find sublime and chaste delight elsewhere, it taketh us off from the unlawful pleasures of the flesh. The context intimateth

this, 'Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit,' &c.; James v. 13, 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray: is any merry? let him sing psalms.' Spiritual joy is the best cure of carnal, for we keep our joy pure, and our delights are safe and healthful.

[2.] It inspireth us with fortitude, courage, and constancy in wrestling for the truth; for singing of psalms is our exultation in God, or our making our boast of him in defiance of all worldly powers that can hurt us; as Paul and Silas when whipped and imprisoned, and many of the martyrs, raised their courage by singing of psalms.

[3.] It is profitable, as the psalm not only holdeth forth what the word read doth, but it stayeth and fixeth the heart upon the sweet and lively meditation of what we sing.

*Use 1.* Let us make conscience of this duty, not only of the matter, but the manner of it, that it may not be carried on in a dead-hearted fashion, or as a cursory exercise. To this end I shall press two things—(1.) Keep up a delight in God; (2.) Be filled with the Spirit.

1. Keep up a holy delight in God, for singing is the vent of our joy; and therefore, unless delight be always kept up, thoughts of God and of the life to come will be unwelcome and unpleasant thoughts. They that joy in the Lord delight most in singing, because everything that bringeth God to remembrance is sweet and acceptable to them; to others the service is but cold and heartless.

2. Be filled with the Spirit. Take heed you do not give the Comforter occasion to remove from you, for then all is uncomfortable: 'I remembered God, and I was troubled,' Ps. lxxvii. 3. But especially look after these standing effects of the Spirit, 'faith, hope, and love.' Faith; till we believe God's being and providence, and our redemption by Jesus Christ, they are not delightful matters to us, whatever they be in themselves. Carnal delight is the joy of sense, but spiritual delight is the joy of faith. The joy of sense is in the creature, but the joy of faith is in God; the joy of sense is in present things, the joy of faith in future things; the joy of sense is in the good of the body, the joy of faith in the soul's good, that it be renewed and reconciled to God; the joy of sense is in the blessings that flow in the channel of common providence, increase of estate, and provisions for the flesh; the joy of faith is in the covenant and promises of God: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' So also for love; when we love God, we love everything that is related to him. Love is nothing else but the complacency and well-pleasedness of our mind in God as our chiefest good: Ps. xvi. 5, 6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' We value and esteem him above all worldly things, therefore we are affected with what is spoken or sung of God himself or his ways, how to enter into his peace with joy, how to please and obey him, or promote his glory. Lastly, for hope; we fetch our great solaces from the world to come. As heaven is the place of our full delight, so the foresight and foretaste of it is the highest delight that is here on earth to be attained; therefore we must often go to heaven for renewed matter of delight: Rom. v. 2, 'By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,



and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' If you come prepared with such a spirit, it will be a cheerful, a profitable thing to sing psalms.

*Use 2.* To show us what a good God we serve, who hath made our delight a great part of our work. God is much for his people's pleasure and holy joy. Many think it is against the will of God that they should rejoice; you are not only at liberty that you may, but under a necessity of duty that you must ever rejoice in God. To this end consider what matter he hath provided for our joy in himself and our redemption by Christ; and one of the Spirit's offices is to be our comforter, and one of the duties of religion is singing of psalms, which is appointed as a help to this purpose.

*Use 3.* To show how much we overlook our profit when we deal slightly in this ordinance. It is a means, as other duties are, not a task; and a means to make our lives both holy and comfortable; therefore let us not contemn it. The same graces which are necessary for other parts of worship, which we make greater reckoning of, are necessary here also.

## SERMON XXV.

*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—EPH. v. 20.

HERE is the second effect of being filled with the Spirit, and it is of great affinity with the former; for it sheweth also what is the great matter, end, and use of christian singing.

In the words observe—

1. The duty, 'Giving thanks.'
2. The circumstances of the duty—
  - [1.] The time, 'Always.'
  - [2.] The matter, for what, 'For all things.'
  - [3.] The object to whom this religious worship is to be given, 'To God and the Father.'
  - [4.] The manner, or means by whom, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

*Doct.* That thanksgiving to God is a great and necessary duty becoming all christians.

1. I shall open this duty as it is here set forth.
2. How necessary and becoming christians this is.

I. To open the duty. Here is—

First, The substance, or act of it, 'Giving thanks.' Praise relateth to God's excellencies, thanksgiving to God's benefits. There is a twofold thanksgiving—(1.) By way of celebration or commemoration, when we speak of God's mercies one to another; (2.) By way of invocation, adoration, or worship, when we express them to God himself.

1. A thanksgiving by way of commemoration, when we communicate to others what experience we have had of God: Ps. xxii. 22, 'I will

declare thy name, unto my brethren ; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' The name of God is that by which he is made known in his word or works. As we are to propagate to others what knowledge we get of God by his word, so also what we have found of him in his works, how God hath made known his name to us by acts of grace and mercy : Ps. lxvi. 16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' This is one part of the communion of saints, to call upon others to praise God with us, as one bird sets the whole flock a chirping. We are usually barren, vain, foolish in our communications with one another. This celebration and commemoration should be our cure and solace : Eph. v. 4, *ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐνχαριστία*, 'But rather giving of thanks.' Speaking to each other of God's goodness is a christian's mirth, and a choice remedy against foolish talking, jesting, and other sins. To put down idle and sinful talk, he prescribeth giving of thanks.

2. There is thanksgiving by way of adoration, or direct address to God himself. This is a special part of christian worship, therefore the whole is expressed by it : 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 'Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?' where the whole christian worship is expressed by 'blessing with the spirit,' or 'giving of thanks.' And thence God is said to 'inhabit the praises of Israel,' Ps. xxii. 3, because he is often magnified and praised by his church : the praises of Israel, that is the subject of it. Yea, it is doctrinally declared by God himself : Ps. l. 23, 'He that offereth praise glorifieth me.' The Lord taketh it as an honour to himself when we praise him for his excellencies or bless him for his benefits. This thanksgiving is an acknowledgment of benefits received to the praise of the bestower. There is included in it partly notice and observation of what God hath done for us. The contrary is taxed, Isa. i. 3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' The brute beasts know such as feed them and make much of them, but men take no notice of what great things God hath done for them : Hosea ii. 8, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' Little notice is taken of God's kindness in the world. And partly too an esteem of the benefits received ; for we cannot give thanks for what we value and prize not. Solomon gave cities to Hiram, but they pleased him not ; and therefore he called them Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty, 1 Kings ix. 12, 13, because they stood in low and moorish places. So God vouchsafeth many mercies, but most men are discontented with their portion ; the mercies of God please them not : Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord ; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?' What love is it to be restored to bare hills and mountains, or to be brought home to a wasted land, where they were to begin the world again ? On the contrary, they that esteem the effects of God's love will bless him, and praise him : Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.' They that are affected with mercies received cannot but be affectioned towards the God of their mercies, and therefore will speak good of his name. And partly actual acknow-



ledgment; they excite and stir up their hearts to give God the glory these mercies call for: Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' This acknowledgment, if it be serious, will excite and urge them to make some recompense, as to consider what they may do for God: Ps. cxvi. 12, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' And it was Hezekiah's fault, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, compared with Isa. xxxviii. 9, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness, that 'he rendered not according to the benefit done him.' Therefore unless this acknowledgment doth excite us and urge us to honour, please, serve, and glorify God, it is not right. They do anew devote themselves to him upon every eminent mercy.

Secondly, The circumstances of the duty.

1. Of time, 'Always.'

But how is this possible, that we should be without intermission in the actual exercise of this duty?

[1.] We must always have a heart prepared and disposed to give thanks; for the words arise from the heart if we be serious; therefore the heart must be so purified and prepared that we may be ever ready to give thanks to God: Ps. lvii. 7, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.' When the heart is prepared the work is easy. Now we must never lose our thankful frame. A sense of God's favour must ever be kept fresh upon our hearts; though we are not always blessing God, yet we must ever be prepared to bless God.

[2.] We must not omit the proper occasions, but must do it frequently and constantly. Some mercies are so general and beneficial, that they should be remembered every day; as the great blessings of the gospel, Christ, and the new covenant: Heb. xiii. 15, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.' He had spoken before of Christ as a sin-offering. And besides, God is adding new mercies continually to those which we had before, and so giveth new matter of praise and thanksgiving: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation;' Lam. iii. 22, 23, 'It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness;' that is, daily renewed. There is no time in which we receive not some benefit from God. Now upon all occasions we should acknowledge the great and fatherly mercies of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3.] 'Always,' that is, in all conditions, both in adversity and prosperity; in whatsoever estate we are or may be, it can never be so ill with a christian but he hath cause to give thanks to God. Job blesseth for taking as well as giving: Job i. 21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Choicer mercies are continued to us than those taken away from us, for we have God still, and an interest in the covenant. So we are bidden, Isa. xxiv. 15, 'Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea;' that is, in the fire

of tribulation. If we walk in the fires, and have the Son of God to be with us, we have no cause to despond.

2. The matter for which we are to give thanks, 'For all things.' The same extent of the matter we may see in a parallel place : 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks.' Only what is here propounded collectively, 'For all things,' is there propounded distributively, 'In every thing.'

[1.] The universal particle comprehendeth all his benefits ; not one of them should be overlooked or forgotten : Ps. ciii. 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' But how is it possible to remember them ? There is an habitual remembrance and an actual commemoration.

(1.) An habitual remembrance is necessary for all God's acts of mercy, not only for the more eminent and signal acts of providence, but for every daily kindness we receive from him. An habitual remembrance is when we are possessed with a greater sense of God's love, and an esteem of him because of his never-failing compassions. The more fuel is added to the fire, the more the flame increaseth ; so every mercy is so far taken notice of as to increase our love to God and trust and dependence upon him, and the cheerfulness of our obedience to him. We love him more and serve him better because of his daily kindness to us.

(2.) An actual commemoration of every single mercy is impossible. We must live over a life as long again to repeat the mercies of our former lives. Yet, as much as may be, we should be express and particular ; for particulars are most affective. We must help ourselves by two things—(1.) By a frequent reckoning ; look into thy bill, what owest thou ? Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand : when I awake, I am still with thee.' Innumerable are the mercies of God ; the oftener we come to audit, the better. (2.) The other help is, since we cannot recall the several and single acts of God's mercy, yet to recall the several kinds and sorts of them, which the psalmist called reckoning them up in order : Ps. xl. 5, 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward : they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee ; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' To speak of them in heap, when we cannot speak of them in tale, as a painter representeth a crowd in a little table by a cluster of heads. But then, secondly, those that are eminent, like red letters in the calendar of our lives. It is God's end in giving them : Ps. cxi. 4, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.' And it is charged as a great crime upon his people that 'they soon forgot his works,' Ps. cvi. 13 ; that is, his eminent and signal deliverances. These are masterpieces of providence great helps to relieve faith, and never be forgotten by us.

[2.] This universal particle comprehendeth all kinds of mercies, spiritual and temporal mercies.

(1.) Common and temporal mercies. These should not be lost in the throng, for he that is not faithful in a little will not be faithful in much. As he that doth not make conscience of small sins will fall into



greater, so he that is not thankful for the smaller mercies disposeth himself to a stupid carelessness and insensibility of the greatest mercies: Luke xvi. 11, 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' A suspected leaky vessel we try with water first, and then with wine. Besides, they all came from the same love, the greater and smaller mercies: Ps. cxxxvi. 25, 'Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.' The same reason is rendered all along for daily mercies, as well as those mighty ones. Besides, nothing should be contemned where nothing is deserved: Lam. iii. 22, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.' We are unworthy of the air we breathe in, as well as of the great mercies of the covenant: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' Therefore, Deut. viii. 10, 'When thou hast eaten and are full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee;' Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' Besides, a small remembrance from a great prince is esteemed a great favour: Ps. cxiii. 6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' Again, common mercies come from special love, and are sanctified and blessed to us when received with thanksgiving: 1 Tim. iv. 3-5, 'And commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' We take them out of God's hand, and use them for his glory. We have Christ's example, which should be noted, because thanksgiving at meals is grown out of fashion. Now we read, John vi. 11, 'And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down.' Our ordinary refreshings are great mercies, and God should be acknowledged in them; though they be but coarse fare, we must bless God for it, as well as for choice dainties: 'Five barley-loaves, and two small fishes,' ver. 9. Men sit down and rise up from their meals like brute beasts; and we are forced to contend with the godless and unbelieving world about the plainest duties. So in ver. 23, 'Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after the Lord had given thanks.' He doth not only remember the miracle, but the Lord's thanksgiving and blessing. Well, then, God must be owned in every mercy.

(2.) Spiritual mercies. Certainly we are to bless God for spiritual and eternal benefits more than for those which are bodily and temporal; for our thankfulness ariseth from the esteem we have of the mercies which we give thanks for. Now we ought most to esteem and value these benefits as being the choice fruits of God's special love to us: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' And these mercies render us most acceptable to God: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted

in the beloved.' Jesus Christ came from heaven to purchase them for us, and his Spirit worketh them in us; surely we should be most affected with these. Other mercies may be overvalued, especially as we look upon them as provision for the flesh, and so our very thankfulness may be a snare; and though religion tips our tongues, our lusts are secretly gratified and pleased, while God is endeared to us, not as giving pardon and life by Christ, but food and plenty of worldly increase.

(3.) Ordinary mercies and extraordinary. Ordinary mercies are our constant diet: Ps. lxxviii. 19, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.' Extraordinary mercies are our cordials in a fainting fit: Ps. lxxvii. 10, 'I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High;' the wonderful experiences we have had of God.

(4.) Positive mercies and privative mercies. Positive mercies: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Freedom from all the sins and dangers we might have fallen into. Privative mercies, because so many miserable objects as we meet with in the world, so many grounds of thanksgiving have we that we are not as they. Did we know how busy the devil is to hurt us, were it not for the sense of God's providence round about us, we would be more thankful to God. Positive mercies are observed, because these come to our notice and view; we know what we have received: we do not know how many dangers God hath prevented; but we may know how he hath stored our houses with blessings.

(5.) Our personal mercies, and other men's mercies. No question but we are to give thanks for our own personal mercies, as being most nearly concerned in them. We are also to give thanks for others: 2 Cor. i. 11, 'You also helping together by prayer for us; that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.' God's children rejoice in one another's prosperity, and are interested in one another's mercies, as if they were their own: Phil. ii. 27, 'For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also.' Epaphroditus was recovered, and Paul gave thanks to God: Ps. cxlii. 7, 'The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.' When one is delivered, all the rest are glad of it. The more any partake of spiritual life, the stronger is spiritual sympathy; they mourn and rejoice with others, as by mutual prayers, so by mutual praises. God would knit our hearts in spiritual love to one another: Ps. xxxiv. 3, 'O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.'

(6.) Public mercies and private mercies. The cabin is of no stead when the ship is lost. In the peace of the nations wherein we are embarked we have peace. The children of God are wont to be affected with the good or ill of Sion above their private loss and benefit. When well at ease, Nehemiah and Daniel mourned because it went ill with the church. Especially when both are bad; as that woman, 1 Sam. iv. 19, when she heard her father and husband were dead, and the ark of God was taken, she would not be comforted, but died. When it is



ill with them, yet well with the church ; they rejoice as Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, Phil. i. 18. But when it is well with both, then they rejoice : Ps. cxxviii. 6, ' Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.'

(7.) Mercies in hand and mercies in hope. That argueth a strong faith, affectionately to praise God for mercies in hope as well as mercies in hand : Ps. xxxi. 19, ' Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men !' Abraham, when he had not a foot in the land of Canaan, built an altar and offered thank-offerings to God Gen. xiii. 18 ; so God's children ' rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2 ; 1 Peter i. 8, ' Whom having not seen ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

(8.) Bless God for things prosperous and things adverse. I know it is a question whether we are to give thanks to God for afflictions, for poverty as well as wealth, for sickness as well as health, for death as well as life.

*Ans.* 1. Simply we cannot give thanks for afflictions as afflictions, no more than we can pray for them ; for evil as evil cannot be matter of thanksgiving ; it is in itself matter not of joy, but of grief : Heb. xii. 11, ' No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Thankfulness is the effect of joy ; how then can we be said to give thanks for things prosperous and adverse ?

2. Though we do not simply give thanks for the evil, yet we may give thanks for the good that is mixed with them ; that is to say—(1.) For the mixture : Job ii. 10, ' Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall not we receive evil ?' *Abstulit, sed et prius dedit.* He taketh away opportunities of service, but it is a mercy that he continued them so long. (2.) For the mitigation ; it might have been worse : Ezra ix. 13, ' And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve ;' Lam. iii. 39, ' Wherefore doth a living man complain ?' a man on this side hell. (3.) For the fruit and profit ; if it be not good in itself, it turneth to good : Rom. viii. 28, ' All things shall work together for good to them that love God ;' Ps. cxix. 71, ' It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes ;' Ps. xciv. 12, ' Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' It is well that God doth not give us over to a reprobate sense, and will not let us sleep in our sins ; there is a blessing hid in the cross. (4.) For the final issue, that God may be glorified : 1 Peter iv. 14, ' On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified ;' and we rewarded : Mat. v. 12, ' Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Thus they rejoice and give thanks. Some kind of sufferings are an honour : Acts v. 41, ' And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.'

3. The object to whom this religious worship is to be tendered, ' To God and the Father ;' so Col. iii. 17, ' And whatsoever ye do in word

or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.' God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our God and Father. The meaning is, to God who is the Father, from whom all good things are derived: James i. 17, 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' There is *decursus beneficiorum, et recursus gratiarum*. All is derived from God to us, and all is directed and referred by us to God, and both by Christ: 1 Cor. viii. 6, 'But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' To whom we pray, to him must we give the praise. We pray to God; some sacrifice to their own drag: Hab. i. 16, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' Not only are our prosperities and successes from God, but if we think a good thought or do a good work, it is still of God; and therefore he must have all the glory: Rom. i. 8, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.' Some give thanks to saints and angels; no glory must be diverted from God, to whom we pray. We have the Spirit in prayer inclining us to God only: Rom. viii. 15, 'We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Therefore the glory must solidly and in whole be ascribed to him. Some cannot come to God as a Father but by Christ: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

4. The manner or means, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Why must thanksgiving be made in Christ's name?

(1.) Because there is more of God discovered in Christ than elsewhere: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' If Christ had not come into the world, we had never known the wonders of his love, mercy, and grace, which are now discovered to us in raising us from sin and misery to life and happiness. Now his *φιλανθρωπία*, mankindness, appeared: Titus iii. 4, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.' The angels had the pre-eminence in the creation. There was *φιλαγγελία*, his love to angels seen, as being made nobler substances, enjoying the immediate presence of God; but in redemption there is *φιλανθρωπία*, his love to man. In creation man was made like God, but in redemption God was made like man.

(2.) Christ is the only mediator to convey blessings to us and our services to God; for he is our high priest and intercessor. As our high priest he procured all our mercies for us by his oblation; and by his intercession he conveyeth them to us: Heb. viii. 2, 'He is a minister of the sanctuary,' *τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργῶν*. He maketh our thanksgivings acceptable by presenting them to God as a sacrifice pleasing to him by virtue of his merit: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' As we sue



out mercy in his name, so we give thanks in his name; he is the mediator of our praises as well as our prayers. Without Christ nothing is acceptable to God; our persons out of Christ are odious to God, and God is terrible to us.

(3.) He hath required this duty from us: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' The great duty of the gospel is thankfulness, which enliveneth all the rest; for the gospel is made up of mercies, and therefore called a benefit: 1 Tim. vi. 20, 'Because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.' A great expression of God's love to sinners in Christ: 2 Cor. ix. 15, 'Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.' It is such a law as is mercy. A rule of duty calleth for obedience, but a law that is a remedy and a benefit—a precious remedy, an unspeakable benefit—calleth for gratitude and thankfulness.

(4.) Because all our mercies come to us as the fruit of Christ's death, as wrapped in his bowels, as swimming in his blood, as the fruit of his purchase. Lev. iii. 5, their peace-offering or thank-offering was laid on the top of the burnt-offering. Till we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, nothing we do is acceptable to him.

II. How necessary, profitable, and becoming christians this duty is.

1. How necessary a duty it is appeareth—

[1.] By the light of nature and God's express will in his word. It is evident by the light of nature. Ingratitude is counted an unnatural sin: 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 'Disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections.' This holdeth as to ingratitude to God, for nature teacheth men to promise praise when they beg mercies: Hosea xiv. 2, 'Receive us graciously, and so we will render the calves of our lips.' This is our promise to God, and it is God's paction with us: Ps. l. 15, 'And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Therefore it is unjust to detain this honour and glory from him.

[2.] By his express will revealed in the scripture: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' This should be to christians instead of all reasons, *intuitu voluntatis*; upon the first sight of God's will they should obey. It is not only 'his will,' but 'his will in Christ.' In the new way of government by a redeemer, thankfulness is most suited to the frame of the gospel, and is the main principle of that obedience it calleth for at our hands. The evangelical covenant requireth thankfulness for the mercy provided for us in Christ, as the great duty which includeth all other duties.

2. How necessary a duty it is appeareth by the great profit that cometh of it.

[1.] To keep us always in a remembrance of God, and that invisible hand that reacheth out all our supplies to us. The stupid carnal world looketh to the next hand, but thankfulness bringeth God into sight and remembrance. There are two notions that keep religion alive in the world—that God in a way of justice is the author of all the evil we suffer: Amos iii. 6, 'Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' and that in a way of mercy God is the author of all the good we enjoy: James i. 17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift.

is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ;' Acts xiv. 17, ' Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' All the comfort, protection, peace, and plenty that we have come of God. This humiliation and thanksgiving keep up the notice and remembrance of God in the world. The world had never fallen into atheism and idolatry if these two principles had been well minded.

[2.] The observation and acknowledgment of his benefits breedeth in us a love to God : 1 John iv. 19, ' We love him, because he loved us first ;' Ps. cxvi. 1, ' I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications ;' Luke vii. 47, ' She loved much, because much was forgiven her.' Our thankfulness then must needs excite our love to God, for the more solemnly we remember his love to us, the more we will love him again.

[3.] It doth encourage our hope. God hath given great things to us, and hath promised greater. Now by remembering what is past, we are the more invited to expect what is to come : 2 Cor. i. 10, ' Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us ;' 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, ' Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the gentiles might hear ; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion : and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom ;' Rom. v. 10, ' For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

3. How necessary a duty it is appeareth because it prevents many sins.

[1.] Hardness of heart and security in enjoying the blessings of God's common providence : to the unthankful they prove occasions to the flesh ; so their table is made a snare to them : Ps. lxxix. 22, ' Let their table become a snare before them ; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.' But by thanksgiving the creature is sanctified : 1 Tim. iv. 4, ' For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ;' for in thanksgiving we distinctly remember the author and end of these mercies.

[2.] It suppresseth murmuring, or that querulous, fretting, impatient humour which venteth itself even in our prayers and complaints, and soureth all our comforts. Murmuring is the scum of discontent, by which we entertain crosses with anger and blessings with disdain. It is very incident to man, who is a querulous creature. Now in thanksgiving we see how much more cause we have to give thanks than complain ; this fretting humour is cured when we see how much we are bound to bless God. In murmuring we overlook our mercies, and in thanksgiving our discontent. When we have received so much good, shall we take it ill if the Lord exercise us with a little calamity ? So much undeserved good, shall we take it ill if we feel a little deserved evil ? Job ii. 10, ' What ! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ?'



[3.] It preventeth distrust and carking cares: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Acknowledge what God hath done for you already, and you will the less doubt of his goodness for the future.

[4.] It cureth spiritual pride when we consider who is to be praised for all the good that is in us. They that have more than others are more indebted to grace: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'But who maketh thee to differ from another?' And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' We have it from God and for God, not for our own glory and ostentation. God will be angry if we rob him of the glory of it; Acts xii. 23, Herod was smitten because he gave not God the glory.

*Use 1.* Is it such a duty? Then take heed of impediments and enemies to thankfulness.

1. A proud heart. They delight in their own praises; an humble heart delighteth in the praise of God: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed to thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;' 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19, 'And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?' The proud think themselves worthy of more, and therefore speak diminutively of all they have: It is but thus and thus.

2. A fleshly mind, which looketh to the pleasing of the flesh, and forgets God: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.'

*Use 2.* Is our thanksgiving right?

1. If the heart be brought near to God by every mercy we receive from him: Ps. xvi. 8, 'Give the Lord the glory of his name.'

2. If it breed a great delight in God: Ps. xxxvii. 4, 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.'

3. If it be a cheerful thankful obedience: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service;' John xiv. 15, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'

## SERMON XXVI.

*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*—EPH. v. 21.

THE apostle had laid down the common duties which belong to all christians; now he cometh to special duties which belong to us as we are clothed with particular relations; and he beginneth that discourse with a general exhortation, that concerns both superiors and inferiors,

before he cometh to state the duty of each to other, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.'

In the words observe—

1. The connection or dependence ; for the construction is continued from that clause, 'Being filled with the Spirit,' and it is as applicable to this branch as any of the other ; as, for instance, 'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' And again, 'Be filled with the Spirit, giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So here, 'Be filled with the Spirit, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' The construction is the same. The Spirit's influence is necessary for the duties of our relations, as well as the duties of worship. I observe it the rather, because as the apostle beginneth, so he endeth this discourse : Eph. vi. 10, 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Our corrupt hearts incline us to much unsuitable carriage in our relations. Satan, that envieth the felicity of mankind, opposeth the comfort we have in them ; but yet the glory of God is much concerned in a due family converse. Therefore a plentiful measure of the Spirit is necessary, that we may carry it well in our relations.

2. The substance of the duty, 'Submitting yourselves one to another.' The exhortation is to mutual submission, keeping the order set by God. The business is how this should be understood. Must the husband submit to the wife, as well as the wife to the husband ; the father to the children, the master to the servant, and all be levelled without superiority and government by the law of Christ ?

I answer—Certainly christianity doth not abolish civil distinctions ; therefore—

[1.] Some think this exhortation only concerneth inferiors, pressing them to yield obedience to whom it is due, in subordination to God, as the wife to the husband, the children to the parents, servants to their masters.

[2.] Others better, that this general exhortation concerneth the duties both of superiors and inferiors, and that submission is taken generally for any duty that we are bound to perform to one another for mutual good and advantage. And this interpretation I approve of for these reasons. (1.) Because this sense runneth most smoothly and without forcing. (2.) Because it suiteth with many other scriptures, as I shall show you by and by. (3.) Since all grant this is the preface to the following exhortation, and therein superiors are exhorted as well as inferiors to their proper duties, this should be extended to both. He beginneth indeed with the duty of inferiors, as being most tedious and difficult, but he layeth a charge upon both faithfully to perform their duties to each other ; for we all owe a service of love one to another, and must endeavour to do good in our several places and capacities.

3. The manner of performance, 'In the fear of God ;' that is, so as they would approve themselves to God, who is the author of all order in every community and society of mankind ; and to him we must give an account as our proper judge : 1 Peter i. 17, 'And if ye call on the



Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' They that obey 'only for wrath, and not for conscience' sake,' Rom. xiii. 5, do not fulfil this precept for fear of God, but for fear of men. To obey for conscience' sake is to obey for fear of God.

*Doct.* That mutual condescension to one another in the duties of our places and relations doth very much become those who are filled with the Spirit.

1. I shall inquire wherein this mutual condescension doth consist.

2. What graces are necessary to it.'

3. That this is an unquestionable duty both in superiors and inferiors.

I. Wherein this mutual condescension doth consist?

I answer—It may be considered with respect to ecclesiastical, or civil, or economical power.

1. With respect to ecclesiastical power, which must be determined by the nature of that community for which it serveth. They are a voluntary people: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' And yield up themselves to be guided to everlasting happiness by such helps and means as God hath instituted: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' They covenanted with God to obey him, so also to submit to the institutions of his family. Now here there are teachers and taught, governors and governed. There are some that have the inspection of others, and they must be obeyed in that kind of government which belongeth to souls dedicated to God, which is directive rather than authoritative, and managed by a council rather than a court. And here there must be a mutual condescension both in governors and governed, for in both there is mutual service.

[1.] The governors are but ministers, servants of God for the comfort of the faithful: 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.' They have an honourable office in the family, but still they are ministers and servants; and they are to feed the flock, not as lords over God's heritage, but as directors or guides, by word and example. They should not affect dominion over the Lord's people, but walk holily and humbly, guiding them in a tender and condescending way to their everlasting estate; rather persuading them to the receiving and embracing the gospel than forcing and compelling them to it. And therefore the exercise of their office on their part should not be domination, but ministration and service: Mat. xx. 25-27, 'And they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.' They must please the Lord who serve the souls of men, and promote the work of the Lord in their conversion to God. It is an office of burden and humility; for all the power of the church is a power of eminent charity. 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep,' John xxi. 15-17.

[2.] The governed must meekly submit themselves to these institutions of Christ, and directions given them for eternal life, how contrary

soever they be to our lusts, interests, and carnal prejudices: Heb. xiii. 17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.' Their task is great; now you should make it as easy and pleasing as you can, that they may have comfort in the discharge of their office to you. They should submit, and you should submit; the church doth live in peace by mutual condescension, when every one becometh a mutual servant to another.

2. There is political or civil power, principally greatness and authority in the civil state. This is the Lord's ordinance, and must be submitted to for God's sake: 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.' That is, there is an obligation of conscience upon us to submit, whether to the supreme or subordinate magistrate. And though all kind of honour is due to them, yet they also lie under a higher Lord, and must stoop to the duties required of God to those that are governed by them: Rom. xiii. 4, 'For he is the minister of God to thee for good.' They are servants to God, though not to their people; as angels are ministering spirits, not only to us, but to God. Thus you see the scripture flattereth not superiors, but ranketh them among the subjects of the eternal God; their creator is their judge; and that great power which they have is a great servitude, and those who command are bound to obey; God hath so tied us to one another, that every one is to do his part to promote the common good.

3. There is economical power; that of the husband, parent, master. There are duties which belong to these relations. The wife is to be subject to the husband, but the husband is to love and cherish the wife as his own body. The parents are to govern their children, yet not to provoke them to wrath, but to educate them in the fear of the Lord. The master is to command his servants, but yet to remember they are the Lord's freemen: 1 Cor. vii. 22, 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.' Well, then, this submission is by discharging the duties we owe to each relation.

But why is this called submission?

[1.] Because superiors have a debt of duty upon them, as well as inferiors, which in some cases is hard to perform. Magistrates are to defend and protect their people, and therein many times run great hazards, and are exposed to great cares and difficulties. Pastors are to guide and instruct the flock, to warn, reprove, exhort them, and know the state of the flock by frequent visiting of them. Parents are to educate their children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Husbands (1 Peter iii. 7) are 'to dwell with the wife according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.' This submission on the superior's part lieth in the faithful and loving discharge of their duty to the meanest within their charge; as the magistrate to administer justice equally to all people, high and



low ; the pastor to dispense his duty to rich and poor : James ii. 1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons.' The husband is to cherish the wife in all conditions, sick and well ; masters to stoop to do good to the meanest of their servants, and not rule them according to passion and will ; they have souls to save or lose as well as the best of the family, and therefore they are to take care of all of them, that they may serve the Lord, they and all their household ; their outward condition doth no way hinder our duty to them. Here all are put upon the same level : James i. 9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; but the rich in that he is made low.'

[2.] Because this duty calleth upon us for the meanest services for the common good ; as when a magistrate defendeth the poor against the mighty, and disdaineth not to appear for his meanest subjects : Job xxxi. 34, 'Did I fear a great multitude ? or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of door ?' When the meanest had right on their side, he would own them in it, and had courage and fortitude to bear out their cause, though never so great multitudes opposed them ; neither did the fear of inconveniences, contempt, or calumnies, hinder him to appear for their right. So when ministers visit the meanest, and are ready to repair to them, and pray for them, and take all manner of pains to help them in their spiritual estate. So for masters, when they are careful to help their poor servants in their sickness, and provide for them to the best of their power.

[3.] With all patience to bear their infirmities. It may be they are weak, froward, and know not their duty. The apostle telleth us, Rom. xv. 1, 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' They that know the nature and extent of christian liberty ought to relieve others that do not so well understand it, and should not too rigorously stand on their own knowledge. So governors are to bear with the infirmities of those under their authority, yea, with their sinful weakness when overtaken in a fault ; not to be severe : Gal. vi. 1, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' Now this is a submitting, or a condescension.

[4.] As to equals, there is a submitting ourselves one to another : Rom. xii. 10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another ;' Phil. ii. 3, 'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' We are better acquainted with ourselves than others ; we want some perfection and accomplishment God hath given to them. We ought to speak of our own gifts with modesty, of theirs with charity ; to be severe at home, where we can examine and sift all circumstances, but charitable abroad, where a modest superficial view of things doth best, without a jealous inquiry.

[5.] We are to speak to one another by way of instruction and reproof : Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another ;' Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neigh-

bour, and not suffer sin upon him.' Now it is a submission to take it well : Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil.' Now our yielding to private admonition is an argument of our condescension, and submitting ourselves to one another. But the business is—

Whether an inferior may reprove a superior ?

I answer—It is not a work of mastery, but of christian charity, which lieth upon all ; and when it is modestly managed, it is lawful. The reproof of a superior is an act of justice, of an inferior an act of charity, that we may not suffer evil upon a brother. Naaman's servants reprov'd their master, but with great reverence : 2 Kings v. 13, 'My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it ? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean ?' Now when this is wisely and prudently managed, the elder should take it well from the younger : Job xxxii. 4, 'Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.' Master from the servant, as Naaman did, and magistrates from their subjects, and all superiors from their inferiors.

II. The graces which are necessary for this, to submit ourselves one to another. It is required that we be filled with the Spirit. But I answer—

1. Love, which is the cement of human society ; for where love reigneth, there will be mutual service and submission : Gal. v. 13, 'But by love serve one another ;' Rom. xii. 10, 'Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love.' Christians should be made up of perfect kindness. Where there is love in superiors and inferiors, they will respect each other's good and profit ; and so all christians, none excepted, will be servants one to another ; as being members of the same body, they ought not to live to themselves only, but promote the good of the body, and every member thereof : 1 Cor. xii. 27, 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' In their place and calling every one will do his part, and therefore love sweeteneth all things, and will make us stoop, though to serve the meanest person in the world.

2. Humility, which is opposite to fastidiousness, disdain, and contempt : 1 Peter v. 5, 'Ye all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility ; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' As occasion serveth we should humble ourselves to perform the meanest offices to our brethren. Proud lofty spirits look upon every duty towards their neighbour as below them ; they think it is a vile debasing a man's self ; pride and arrogancy cannot endure any such subjection. Now humility is required of all, of whatsoever age, estate, and condition, of the highest as well as the meanest, like a spire, *minimus in summo*, when at highest, casts the least shadow ; and laden boughs hang the head.

3. 'The fear of God,' that is in the text. Now this ἐν φόβῳ Θεοῦ, 'in the fear of God'—

[1.] Noteth the impulsive cause, that obedience to this precept floweth from this cause. It is done in conscience to his command, and then it is acceptable to God. In singleness of heart fearing God. Nothing is sincerely done toward God and men but what is done in conscience to his command, and with respect to his glory ; therefore inferiors must



obey their superiors in all lawful things upon God's command, and superiors must condescend to all duties toward their inferiors upon God's command: Gen. xlii. 18, 'I fear God,' saith Joseph, and therefore he durst not oppress his brethren.

[2.] The fear of God is the rule and measure of this submission. As it influenceth, so it limiteth it: 'Submit to one another,' but *usque ad aras*, where it entrencheth not upon our duty, not doing anything to please men, which is forbidden by the law of God: Acts v. 29, 'Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.' Therefore the fear of God must regulate the acts of this condescension in good and lawful things, not to flatter and serve our neighbour in his iniquity, but only to please others so far as is consistent with the fear of God.

[3.] The fear of God is necessary, and a great help to this duty.

(1.) Partly to tame that natural fierceness that is in the heart of man, that we may not refuse the yoke; as Nabal was 'such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him,' 1 Sam. xxv. 17. Some are so harsh and churlish, that they will not admit any debate of the cause, or stand so stiffly on their right that they will not bate an ace, say they. But is this becoming the fear of God, or that lenity which christians should use one to another?

(2.) To check our pride, that we may not be ashamed to serve our neighbour in love. It may be they are vile, and of low esteem in the world; but they serve a great God, therefore offend them not: Mat. xviii. 10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' The meanest of God's servants are above our contempt; therefore do not neglect the good and advantage of any, the meanest person. The angels of God are their guardians upon earth, yet have continual frequent recourses to God's glorious presence, to make requests or complaints on their behalf. Therefore those that are so high in God's favour, though little in their own and the world's account, ought not to be despised by you.

(3.) To bridle and curb excess of power. There is a curb and bridle upon the beasts, though they excel men in strength and power, and so they are contained in their subjection and obedience to man: Gen. ix. 2, 'The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth,' that they may not harm you. So is the fear of God a restraint upon man. Nehemiah 'did not eat the bread of the governors, because he feared God,' Neh. v. 15. So Job despised not the cause of his servants, because he and his servants were equally subject to God: Job xxxi. 14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?'

III. I am now to prove that this is an unquestionable duty.

1. It is required in scripture: Gal. v. 13, 'By love serve one another.' By God's providence some are masters, some are servants; but by God's injunction all are to serve one another in love: 1 Peter v. 5, 'Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another.' So that besides the subjection of inferiors, there is a mutual submission and subjection required of all christians, whereby

they are bound to stoop and do good to others, even to them of the lowest degree.

2. I prove it by example. I shall first produce the example of our Lord Jesus Christ: John xiii. 3-5, 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded;' that is to say, Jesus knowing the dignity of his person, and that he was the eternal Son of God, and was about to return to his glory, to take possession of all power in heaven and earth, after the manner of a servant or waiter of the meanest quality, in all humility sets himself to wash and wipe the feet of his own disciples. By the magnificence of the preface, a man would think he had been about to work some great miracle, or give some notable instance or demonstration of his divine power, but the only instance to be seen was that of humility and love. We keep state and stand upon our terms, think it much below us to do any mean office of kindness and love to inferiors; but Christ would exercise the greatest humility when he had the highest thoughts of his own glory; to take down our pride, and to show us that greatness should not hinder us from condescending to the necessities of the meanest people. None is too high to do good, and to humble himself when he may profit others. Well, then, should we not submit ourselves one to another, when Christ hath given us such an example, and urged it upon us for our imitation: John xiii. 13-15, 'Ye call me master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' My next example shall be of the apostle Paul: 1 Cor. ix. 19, 'For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.' This was the condescension of this blessed apostle; though obliged to none, he made himself a servant to all. Bondmen and slaves were wholly in the power of their masters, without giving them any wages or reward; to this he alludeth. Paul was a free man, yet he made himself their slave and servant to gain them to Christ, without any respect to his own profit. My next instance shall be of Job: chap. xxxi. 13, 'If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me.' Though servants and bond-slaves had no power to enter into judgment with their masters, yet he gave them free liberty to plead their cause against him; that is, he would hear their complaints of his carriage towards them, and did endeavour to satisfy them, as justice and equity did require; and used no kind of insolency towards them that were his inferiors, even his own servants.

3. Now I shall give you the reasons of this duty.

[1.] To prevent contempt. Human nature is incapable of bearing it. Whatsoever rank we are in, we should not despise others, but acknowledge the gifts of God in them. Therefore, to prevent this contempt and disrespect that is usually in men's hearts towards inferiors.



(and is a sore trial to them), God requireth that we should submit ourselves to one another. I remember it is said, Prov. xiv. 31, 'He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.' There is a double sort of men there represented, some that oppress the poor, and some that have mercy on the poor. They oppress that despise them, condemn them, deny them their right; these add affliction to affliction, and so reproach God, who puts men into this condition. On the other side, they have mercy on the poor that relieve them, that have the courage and the heart to perform their duty to them, giving them food, raiment, counsel, protection; this man honoureth God, acknowledgeth the dominion of his providence, that God might have put him into the same condition. Again, Prov. xvii. 5, 'Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his maker.' God maketh poor and rich. The heathens counted things struck by thunder sacred. It is God that hath distributed the world into hills and valleys, who hath also made the condition of one man to differ from another. Once more, Prov. xviii. 3, 'When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt; and with ignominy, reproach;' that is to say, they have a wicked and naughty heart that are apt to condemn their neighbours and neglect offices of love to them, and there is nothing so bad but they will do and say against them.

[2.] Because there are none living whom God alloweth only to live to themselves. We are all bound to promote the common good. Now because the duties of inferiors are burdensome, God hath required, by way of recompense, and in a kind of equity, that others should live to us as we live to them. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. viii. 3, 'For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened.' So that duties of inferiors are better performed, and superiority and authority is sweetened to them when it is beneficial.

[3.] Submitting ourselves to one another is required for a supply of mutual necessities. We lack something that the meanest have; if they have strength for labour, others have wisdom and conduct for government. There must be a contemperation; if some are fitted to serve, those that have wealth should bless God that he hath put them into such an able condition to hire their service; if some have wisdom to contrive, others have elocution to recommend a good design; both must serve one another in love. Traffic and commerce is maintained in the world by several commodities of each country's growth. So society and communion among mankind is kept up by variety of gifts; one is for labour and service, another hath wisdom, another wealth, another courage and valour, and all for the good of the whole.

[4.] Because of equality; the equity of this mutual submission is built upon a double equality—(1.) The actual equality of all men by nature; (2.) The possible equality in the course of God's providence.

(1.) The actual equality of all men by nature. All are made by the same God: Acts xvii. 26, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men;' Neh. v. 5, 'Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and their children as our children;' Mal. ii. 10, 'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' If some be superiors, and others inferiors, yet all are equal by nature: Job xxxi. 15, 'Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the

womb? God is the framer of all mankind, the small as well as the great, and that equally in the same kind and in the same way, whatever difference of state there be afterward. Now when God exalts men, they should be mindful of this, if set afar above others by the Lord's grace; therefore they should not bear it high against the meanest; they are their own flesh.

(2.) A possible equality in the course of God's providence: Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' Before we go out of the body there may be strange changes. As the Shunamite, who told the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, 'She dwelt among her own people,' and therefore thought she had no need of the prophet; yet within a while she had need of the prophet's man, when she came and cried to the king for her house and for her land, 2 Kings viii. 5. Well, then, this mutual submission is necessary for us; not only as we are christians, but as we are men.

[5.] We have one Lord to whom we must be accountable: Job xxxi. 14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' There is a religious account besides a natural. Though some are set higher than others, yet God is infinitely high above them all: Ecces. v. 8, 'For he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there be higher than they.' Now those that know this will tremble to do wrong to the least.

*Use* 1. To show how much the christian religion befriendeth human societies; for we owe duties one to another in our several stations. It is neither injurious to princes nor subjects, but it commandeth every one to do good according to his calling.

2. Where the fear of God is rooted in the heart of any, it will make him tender and careful of his duty to man, and from a right principle and motive, and in a right manner, and to a right end.

## SERMON XXVII.

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

EPH. v. 22.

THERE is a general complaint of people's faultiness in their relation; they have been so long untrue to God, that now they are grown unfaithful to one another. It concerneth us to stop this growing mischief. Ministers should not be accessory to this common depravation of manners by their silence. Let us warn them of their duty, whatever cometh of it; and therefore, having continued my discourse on the several verses of this chapter hitherto, I would not dare to break it off here. The apostle having laid down general duties which belong to all christians, he cometh to particular precepts that concern the well ordering of domestical society. Every complete family consists of three pair of relations—husband, wife; parents, children; masters and ser-



vants. The first relation, between husband and wife, is the chiefest, which is the foundation of the rest ; therefore he beginneth with them. And first with the duty of the wife, because it is more easy to perform the duty of love than subjection. To love is sweet, but to obey tedious. Besides, by the obedience of the wife the husband is the sooner induced to love her. The submission of the inferior is a strong motive to the superior to do his part. Therefore he begins with the wife, and saith, 'Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.'

In the words there are—

1. 'The duty of the wife, 'Wives, submit yourselves.'
2. The persons to whom it is to be performed, 'To your own husbands.'
3. The manner how, 'As unto the Lord.'

1. For the duty, 'Submit yourselves.' Subjection in the general on God's part noteth the subordination of one creature to another according to his wise disposal, as the imperfect to the more perfect, and this for the good of both ; for it is so ordered, that in all relations comfort and duty shall go together. On our part it is a ready inclination to obey this order set by God ; for every creature must know his place, and be content with the order wherein God hath set him. According to this order, submission is required of the wife towards her husband ; for though she is not to be subject as children to their parents, much less as servants to their masters ; no, this subjection is more free and ingenuous ; for there is a greater co-ordination between husband and wife than other relations. There is a *συζυγία*, they draw as fellows in the same yoke ; yet subject she must be ; for there can be no order kept in the family unless all the rest be subject to the father of the family. Therefore this authority which the husband hath over the wife is such as is necessary to the order of the family, and the safe and prudent management of affairs herein, and also their comfortable cohabitation with each other ; and so this subjection is no more than is convenient, equitable, and just.

2. The persons, 'To your own husbands.' This is as often repeated as the precept is repeated, and is mentioned partly to note loyalty and chastity. She is to submit, not to the adulterer, but such as they are bound to by their own choice and conjugal covenant. And partly to prevent tyranny. She is to be subject to her own husband, not to the strange woman introduced into the family to usurp the rights of marriage.

3. The manner how it is to be done, 'As unto the Lord.' By the Lord is meant Christ ; and the particle *as* is a note of similitude, not of equality ; for the husband's authority is not equal with that of Christ. This clause importeth many things.

[1.] The regulation of the duty ; it must be done willingly and sincerely, resembling that submission which is performed to Christ, whose image, in his government over the church, the husband beareth in his superiority over the wife. God hath power to dispose of his own creatures as he pleaseth, and as he is obeyed by the servant in the person of his master : Eph. vi. 5, 'Be obedient to your masters as unto Christ ;' and again, ver. 7, 'Doing service to the Lord' ; so he is obeyed by the wife in the person of the husband, who therein is his image : 1 Cor.

xi. 3, 'I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God ;' that is to say, Christ in respect of his office of mediator, is under God, but above all men ; so the man being under Christ, is above all women. Well, then, as we should be obedient unto Christ willingly, heartily, and sincerely, so must the woman be obedient to her husband, who is an emblem of his superiority and power.

[2.] It may import the enforcement, the reason and motive of this duty, because Christ hath commanded it ; and by virtue of the law of Christ all wives must be subject to their husbands ; which doth not disannul, but confirm God's institution, for his precepts are not privative, but accumulative. It is good to see how this duty hath been enforced, first as natural, then as penal, lastly, as comfortable. First, as natural, by the law of nature : 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 'The women are to be in obedience, as also saith the law.' Where, besides God's positive precept, the apostle urgeth the law of nature, 'they ought,' 'as also saith the law.' Secondly, it hath been urged as penal : Gen. iii. 16, when the woman had sinned, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' If there be anything grievous in it, it was introduced by sin. Therefore if this subjection be not so free as before the fall, but joined with sorrow and difficulty, they must remember what occasioned it. Then, lastly, it is urged as comfortable, as required by the law of Christ, and resembling the communion between Christ and the church ; for so it is spoken of everywhere in this chapter. Well, then, the woman is first to subject herself to Christ, and in love to him to subject herself to her husband.

[3.] 'As unto the Lord' implieth a limitation ; this subjection must be in all things which belong to the lawful authority and superiority of the husband ; for so it seemeth to be expressed, Col. iii. 18, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.' All fitting obedience must be yielded to him, so far as Christ hath given the husband power over the wife.

[4.] It importeth Christ's acceptance of this duty. He interpreteth this subjection and obedience as given to himself, and the contrary as rebellion against himself ; for it is service done to Christ : which may give the woman comfort against all unkindnesses, and unthankful returns from her husband. She is obedient, but the husband froward ; but Christ will recompense this dutiful submission, though the husband do not.

*Doct.* That wives must reckon it their unquestionable duty to be subject to their husbands.

Let me show you—(1.) Wherein this subjection consisteth ; (2.) The reasons and grounds of it.

I. Wherein it consisteth. To speak briefly of it, this subjection lieth in two things—in reverence and obedience.

1. In reverence, which is both inward and outward.

[1.] The inward, in a due esteem of the husband, which is the ground of all love and submission. So it is said, Eph. v. 33, 'Let the woman reverence her husband.' If for nothing else, yet in a humble acknowledgment of his right by God's ordinance ; for esteem is not only due to personal qualifications, but to the eminent dignity wherein



God hath placed any creature with whom we have commerce; and if we cannot acknowledge them for any worth in them, yet we must acknowledge God in them, who hath put his image of superiority upon them, that we may the better discharge our duties to them.

[2.] Outward reverence is both in word and deed. First, in word, by a reverent speaking of them and to them; for the Holy Ghost taketh notice of this: 1 Peter iii. 6, 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Sarah testifieth her obedience and dutiful carriage to her husband by her respectful language to him and of him. The Lord taketh notice of the least act of sincere obedience to his commands, even when it is mixed with many sinful failings. The whole passage from whence this is taken savoured of unbelief: Gen. xviii. 12, 'After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' There is nothing commendable but that one word which expresseth her reverence of her husband, and yet she is commended as one of the holy women trusting in God; and from thence the apostle inferreth how much women should give reverence to their wicked and infidel husbands, for that is the case in hand. Secondly, in deed; their behaviour towards them should be far from all irreverence and contempt; as it is taken notice of as a wicked practice in Michal, that her husband was despised in her eyes when he testified his religious joy by dancing before the ark; and therefore God smote her with barrenness till the day of her death, 2 Sam. vi. 20, with 23. She upbraids him, and mocketh him: 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day!' as if he had behaved himself not like a king, but one of the rascal multitude. Mark, it is said in the 16th verse that first 'she despised him in her heart,' and then taunts at him, and uttereth her contempt by scornful and proud upbraiding. When their love is stabbed at the heart, the outward carriage will not be dutiful, but contemptuous and scornful. But doth God pass by this breach of matrimonial duty? No; she procured from God a sore punishment; she continued barren to the day of her death, and her crime is registered with the black coal of infamy to all posterity.

2. Obedience; that is showed in many things.

[1.] In studying to please rather than to be pleased; for the apostle telleth us that 'she that is married careth for the things of this world, that she may please her husband,' 1 Cor. vii. 34; that is, counts it part of her calling to take her part and care of domestical affairs, that she may be pleasing and acceptable to her husband.

[2.] By fulfilling his commands in all things lawful, and not contrary to her duty to God: Titus ii. 5, 'Let wives be obedient to their own husbands.' And this not with a grudging, discontented sullenness; as Zipporah, in circumcising her son, cast the foreskin at Moses' feet, saying, 'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me,' Exod. iv. 25, by way of angry upbraiding him, that such severity must be exercised on her son; at least that is the meaning our translation seemeth to hold forth. But with readiness and willingness, as a duty to be performed as unto God, who will be served not by constraint, but with a ready mind; and therefore they must obey not out of necessity, but conscionably, and with all cheerfulness. Instances of this we have in holy women who trusted in God; as Sarah followed Abraham when he went into a

strange country, and was partaker with him of the blessings there, Gen. xii. 5; and in entertaining the angels, Gen. xviii. 6. When Abraham said unto Sarah, 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it quickly, and make cakes upon the hearth'; we find no disputing and gainsaying of these commands, but a ready obedience is presupposed, which all good women should imitate.

[3.] By submitting her will to her husband's content, and her desires to his approbation and allowance: Gen. iii. 16, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband,' that is, subject to him, 'and he shall bear rule over thee.' This is one clause in the woman's censure after the transgression; and we can neither make God's laws straiter nor larger than they are, and therefore the woman must be content with the duty God hath imposed on her.

[4.] In patience under his rebukes. So the apostle: 1 Tim. ii. 12, 'But I suffer not a woman to teach, and to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.' The apostle giveth directions there concerning the woman's public and domestical carriage. As to her public carriage, 'I suffer her not to speak in the church,' *οὐδε ἀνθεντεῖν ἀνδρός*, that is the word; not to carry it as if her will were authentic, or the rule of the family, but, in opposition to both, she is to be 'in silence'; as not to teach in the church, so at home to be obedient without replying or countermanding. And that is the reason why a meek and quiet spirit is so much commended as an ornament of a gracious woman: 1 Peter iii. 4, 'The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.' Meekness and quietness is chiefly exercised in bridling our passions, when anything falleth out cross and contrary to our desires and expectations, and we eschew all needless contradiction and expressions of malcontentedness. Now this is not only gaining upon the husband, but is very acceptable to God, who delighteth in the graces he hath wrought in his own people. But now, on the contrary, a humorous moroseness and impatiency is very displeasing unto God and man, and destructive of family society: Prov. xiii. 19, 'A contentious wife is a continual dropping.' As the coming in of the rain in a ruinous house doth founder it, and rot it more and more, and nothing can be preserved from hurt by reason of it, so there is no safety nor comfort in cohabitation with those of that temper. So again, Prov. xxvii. 15, 16, 'A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand which bewrayeth itself;' that is, a brawling woman is so fierce, that a man can no more tame her than shut up the wind in the hollow of his fist, nor hide the smell of a fragrant ointment when he hath it in his hand; so ready they are to show their petulancy upon all occasions.

[5.] By being a comfort and a help to him: Gen. ii. 18, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.' The woman is to be a help, not a hindrance; not the governor, for the right is originally in the man, but a help in government, to ease him in part of his burden and cares; a help every way, for the comfort of society, for assistance in governing the family, for the increasing and for the propagation and continuance of posterity; for these uses was the woman created, and intended by God, though by sin afterward she



became a snare to him. Well, then, this is her office and duty of service still, which by God she is deputed unto. She is to be a help before him, that is, to minister unto him; as when they sought a wife for David: 1 Kings i. 2, 'One that may stand before the king.' Now this is the duty of all good wives: Prov. xxxi. 12, 'She will do him good, not evil, all the days of her life;' that is, she studieth to do good to her husband, and to prevent the evil that may come unto him; whereas foolish wives pluck down the house they should build up, Prov. xiv. 1, proving moths in their husband's estates by their idleness and wastefulness; thorns in their sides, vexing those whom they should comfort; snares, by perverting those whom they should draw to God and quicken in godliness, corrupting the children and family whom they should instruct. In short, this we learn by this point, that the woman is not man's guide, but his help; and those abilities which God hath given her are for obedience, not for government; the man being ruler and governor, but the wife is his helper and partner in the cares of the family. Assistance is her business, not chief command.

[6.] In not disposing servants or the estate without the husband's leave or consent. Servants: when Sarah thought herself wronged or despised by Hagar, yet she puts her not away till she had sought the husband's permission, and made her complaint to him: Gen. xvi. 6, 'Behold, thy maid is in thy hand;' before she could do nothing to her. But now as to the disposing of the estate there is a greater difficulty. Certain it is she may not take wastefully of her husband's substance to spend at her pleasure; but she is not utterly barred of works of mercy; for this duty lieth upon all: 'To communicate and distribute forget not.' And it is said of the good wife, Prov. xxxi. 20, 'She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.' She hath not only some small pittance to give to the poor, but a larger bounty for the needy and deeply necessitous; therefore it is said, 'She reacheth out her hands;' that is, distributeth to them in a more plentiful measure. And we read, Luke viii. 3, that 'Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, ministered unto him of their substance;' that is, supplied him with necessaries. Our Lord Jesus could have given them more than he received, but he would leave an example. Now whence this stream of bounty should be fed, whether of that which is personally their own and reserved in marriage, or by express leave and consent of the husband, as the Shunamite sought her husband's consent to entertain the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 8-10, or by general consent, when his heart trusts in her, and he referreth things to her discretion, or she being bound to show mercy as well as the husband, she has not so far a joint interest in the estate to convert some of it discreetly and wisely to holy and charitable uses; whether from one or all these, I will not now dispute. The discussion might do more hurt than good, because of the unseasonableness and the calumnies of evil-minded persons.

## II. The grounds and reasons.

1. The law of nature written by God's own finger in the hearts of men. We read of those who were heathens, that they enacted a law and decree: Esther i. 20, 22, 'That every man should bear rule in his

own house ; and that all the women should give honour to the husband, both great and small ;' and that upon the queen's not vouchsafing to come to the king when he sent for her, they thought it an example of an evil taint, and pernicious to their household power. Indeed both anciently and to this very day, great is the power of the husbands over their wives in Persia. Now shall heathens see that which christians do not ?

2. God's ordination, which a holy heart dareth not disobey. Now God hath expressly commanded it in his word in the text ; so Col. iii. 18, ' Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord ;' Titus ii. 5, ' To be obedient to their own husbands ;' 1 Peter iii. 1, ' Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands.' And where not ? A gracious heart will say, If God hath required me to be subject, I will be subject. They dare not enlarge themselves where God hath straitened them. The sight of God's will is instead of all reasons ; as for their duty in general : 1 Thes. iv. 3, ' For this is the will of God, even your sanctification ;' so for this particular duty of obedience to superiors : 1 Peter ii. 15, ' So is the will of God, that ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' Well, then, if God, who hath the power of disposing of his creatures, and who is to be obeyed in the person of the husband, hath commanded this, this silenceth all debates and mutterings to the contrary.

3. The natural imperfection of the woman. The apostle calleth her ' the weaker vessel,' 1 Peter iii. 7. Abilities of mind are not ordinarily so strong in her as in the man ; and they have fewer opportunities than man hath for perfecting their natural parts ; and they are not so able to provide for themselves, modesty not permitting them to go up and down in the world. Therefore though God would have them copartners with the man in the good things of this life, yet he hath entrusted the government in the hands of the man.

4. The manner and order of the creation. The woman was made after man, out of man, and for man. God formed man first, and then the woman out of him, and for man's good. This reason is urged by the apostle : 1 Tim. ii. 13, ' For Adam was first formed, then Eve ;' 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9, ' For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' This noteth her subordination and dependence on him : ' After man ;' therefore man must be superior.

You will say then, The birds and beasts should be preferred, for they were created before either.

*Ans.* The apostle speaketh of the same kind, not of diverse ; but ' of man,' and not he of her. Therefore even in innocency was she subject to Adam, though then without grief and molestation : ' For man,' as appears from the end of the creation of the woman, which was to be a help and comfort to him ; for whatever serveth to any end is lesser than the end for which it serveth.

5. From the woman's being first in the transgression ; for this is a part of the sentence, Gen. iii. 16, ' He shall bear rule over thee.' There is little reason that the course settled in the creation should be changed after the fall ; for the woman was first seduced, and then draweth her husband into the fellowship of the sin. Therefore God in effect telleth



her, Since thou canst not rule thyself, meet it is that thou shouldst be put under the rule and power of another. The apostle deduceth this subjection from the same ground: 1 Tim. ii. 14, 'But Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression;' that is, Adam was not first deceived, but Eve; she was first cheated by the serpent, and so a cause and beginning of ruin on all mankind; therefore it is equal ever afterwards that the woman should obey the man, because the man perished by hearkening to the wife: her honour was first lost.

6. The inconveniences that would ensue if this subjection were taken away. There must be order in every society, without which there followeth division, and thereupon confusion; and a house divided cannot stand. Now the fittest to govern the family is the husband, who is the most worthy, being created after the image of God, and the woman after the image of the man. We see *pax est tranquillitas ordinis*; trouble the order of nature, and presently great inconveniences follow, thunders, earthquakes, inundations; so disturb the order of due subjection in a family, and then nothing but strife, clamours, mutual jealousies.

*Use 1.* Is reproof to several sorts.

1. Of all those frothy and profane wits who scoff at women's subjection, and make it a matter of unsavoury mirth. See how misbecoming christians this is, partly as it is a duty required by God. Should any of God's laws be made matter of laughter and derision to us? This is to make mock of sin, which is the guise of atheistical fools, Prov. xiv. 9; for if we scoff at the law that forbiddeth it, we make the transgression a mere matter of laughter. I am sure it weakeneth our reverence of God's precepts. Partly as it is a great duty which enforceth all the rest. For our easier and shorter direction, the scripture compriseth all the duty of the wife in one word, 'submission;' as all the duty of the husband in the word 'love.' And what God intended for a help, shall we turn it into matter of laughter? Let the woman submit to her husband, and she will not stick at other duties; as, let the husband love his wife, and all family converse will be easy. Now should we strike at all conjugal duties, and stab them at the heart, as they do that weaken that reverence which belongeth to the fundamental duties, by making matter of sport of them? Once more, the occasion on which God revived this precept should intimate graver thoughts; for it was upon the woman's being first in the transgression which was the fountain of all our miseries. Now the remembrance of the fall of our first parents should check all profane and unsavoury mirth, rather than feed it.

2. It reproveth those that dispute against it by manifold cavils; but no reasoning must be allowed against a plain and known duty. Therefore, to prevent these disputes, let me lay down two conclusions—

[1.] On the wife's part; no privilege of birth, parts, breeding, can exempt her from it. If she be a wife, whatever she be, she must be in subjection to her own husband. We cannot dispense with God's ordinance. She still ought to look upon her husband as one placed by God in a degree of superiority above her; and the law of nature, and the ordinance of God, and her own covenant, bind her to submission and

dutifulness to him. God hath not said, Such women shall be subject, and such not, but speaketh to all indefinitely: 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.' If any have peculiar gifts of wisdom and prudence, it is to make them the more serviceable, and to cover and supply their husband's defects; as Abigail did Nabal's.

[2.] On the husband's part; no personal infirmity, no frowardness of nature, no error in religion (1 Cor. vii. 13), deprives him of it. The husband's wickedness and disobedience to the gospel doth not lessen the relation, or vacate the duty belonging thereunto. No; rather the conscientious party is more strictly tied to a faithful discharge of their duty, to gain upon the other party. The relation is only loosened in case of adultery, and lawful divorce thereupon, Mat. v. 32, or wilful desertion, 1 Cor. vii. 15. In other cases you must bear your burden. If you object, They are unfit; you should not have chosen such to rule you; but having chosen them, you must assist them the best you can in a dutiful, not a masterly way.

3. It reproveth them that have no reason to allege but their own imperious and peevish humour causeth them to live discontentedly and disobediently in this relation; they stand in no awe of their husbands, and will not be subject. These live in plain rebellion and defiance of God's ordinance; and they should bethink themselves how it will stand with the profession they make of being christians, or what account they shall give in the judgment, when they are to pass their doom and trial, how they have glorified God in this relation; what they have done as wives for his honour.

4. It reproveth those husbands that by their own default lose their authority and dignity, and are themselves causes that their own power is lessened and diminished, either by their intemperance, behaving themselves as beasts rather than men, that they are altogether unfit to judge what is meet and good for the family; so that if the prudent wife did not contribute her assistance, all would go to ruin; or by their faulty easiness, giving way to evil; as Adam permitted himself to be seduced by his wife, and Jezebel's overruling her husband Ahab in the matter of Naboth's vineyard, which proved both the ruin of her, and her husband, and the whole family, 1 Kings xxi. 7, 22-24. It is true the husband is to govern not by fear, but by love. He is the image of Christ in governing his church, and the wife is not a slave, but a meet help; but this love should not be a snare to him. And it is true the wife should not be despised, for God saith to Abraham, 'Hearken to the voice of Sarah.' But there is a difference between hearkening to good counsel, and swallowing a temptation, and being driven to evil by the woman's imperiousness.

*Use 2.* Is to exhort wives to submit to their own husbands.

Here I shall take notice—(1.) Of the impediments; (2.) The motives.

1. The impediments.

[1.] Pride. When they think of their own birth, beauty, wisdom, beyond what is meet, and so take upon them more than they ought, contemning the husband's authority; but they should remember their duty dependeth not upon their birth, beauty, portion, but God's ordinance. On this is founded the husband's authority, and subjec-



tion of the wife, which neither can nor ought to be abrogated and changed by these accidental things. They should also consider that pride is no great sign of their worth, and these are soonest blown up, and it is conceit rather than solid worth, and that this motive of pride is from the devil to draw them into rebellion against God.

[2.] A defect of true love; for love maketh all services easy and cordial: Gen. xxiv. 20, 'Jacob's seven years seemed to him but a few days;' Ps. cxix. 167, 'My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.' And it is so to a woman also; she that loveth will study to please, for love will always mind us of our duty. Therefore parents should not force their children to marry whom they do not love: Gen. xxiv. 57, 58, 'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.' Let them also take care of themselves, that they do not for honour or riches make choice of such husbands as they cannot love; and after marriage let them avoid all, even the lightest, causes of offence. Things glued together may be easily disjointed. God must be sought to keep up this love; especially let it not be weakened by impure and straggling thoughts.

[3.] Affectation of vanity; for a vain woman will never attend to these household duties which belong to conjugal subjection, but will either be gadding abroad to see and to be seen, affecting great pomp of living, as costly array, vanity of fashions, and other things than will stand with the profit of the family. The vain woman is described, Prov. vii. 12, 'Now she is without, now she is in the street, waiting in every corner.' Now they that are sick of vanities care neither for husband, children, nor family; and therefore let women watch against this evil. The apostle directeth them to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, 2 Tim. ii. 9.

[4.] Want of self-denial. Self-denial, as it maketh churches and kingdoms happy, so it maketh families happy, when every one in their place is willing to bear a part of the burden; this maketh us fit to serve one another; as the apostle: 1 Cor. x. 33, 'As I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own things, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' So *mutatis mutandis*, proportionably should the christian wife say. When we can deny self-will and self-ends, no duties will be burdensome to us. Now self-denial is so essential to christianity, and, though it be troublesome to the flesh, bringeth such comfort and peace into our consciences, that no good christian should be without it; especially the woman, who by her state of life is not ordinarily exposed to public hazards, should not be without this character of Christ's disciples, self-denial.

## 2. Motives.

[1.] It is easier and safer to obey than to prescribe and direct, and more felicity is found in obedience than in commands; and in the event it is found more safe; as Zipporah, by obeying her husband in circumcising the child, saved his life, Exod. iv. 26.

[2.] It is better to give the husband occasion of thanksgiving than of complaining: James v. 9, 'Grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned,' *μὴ στενάζετε*; especially in superiors: Heb. xiii. 7, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may

do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.' So in other relations God expecteth honour: Prov. xviii. 22, 'Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour from the Lord;' Prov. xix. 14, 'Houses and riches are the inheritance of our fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.'

[3.] Your own peace, that your 'prayers may not be interrupted,' 1 Peter iii. 7.

[4.] Honour to God. (1.) It takes away the reproach of the gospel: Titus ii. 5, 'Obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;' that christian religion may not be thought to impose anything contrary to moral virtues. (2.) That gainsayers may be won to God: 1 Peter iii. 1, 'Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'

## SERMON XXVIII.

*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.—EPH. v. 23.*

THE words contain a reason of the foregoing precept, both of the matter and manner of the duty. Why subject to their 'own husbands?' Why, 'as unto the Lord?' The reason is taken from the resemblance which the husband carrieth in family government to Christ.

In them observe three things—(1.) What the husband is to the wife; (2.) What Christ is to the church; (3.) The resemblance between the one and the other, 'Even as Christ.' There is a similitude, though not an exact equality in the case.

In handling of this scripture, we must first speak of Christ's relation to his church, and then of the husband's relation to the wife; for first we must consider the pattern before we can state the resemblance.

In the pattern two relations are mentioned; 'Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.' These titles which are given to Christ I shall speak of—(1.) Conjunctly; (2.) Separately and apart.

1. Conjunctly. Christ is both head and saviour; he is a head to rule and govern his people, and a saviour to help, succour, and protect them. The word *head* sheweth the power wherewith he is invested to command, direct, and order the church. And the other word, *saviour*, implieth our benefit, and the good that we have by his government. He is such a saviour that he is also a head; such a head that he is also a saviour. It is obvious and easy to observe, in Christ's style and title, a mixture of words that imply power and sovereignty and also goodness and mercy; some that intimate privilege to us, others that bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both lord and Christ.' He is Lord, supreme



governor, as well as Christ, an anointed saviour; not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. As he saveth his people from sin and misery, so he will also govern them. And on the other side, Christ's dominion over the church doth tend unto, and is exercised in bringing about, the church's salvation. So Acts v. 31, 'Whom God hath raised up to be prince and saviour.' Still the compound notion and mixed representation of Christ's offices is offered to our serious consideration; for these two must not be divided, head and saviour, prince and saviour, lord and Christ.

[1.] To prevent mistakes and dangerous errors incident to mankind. Some on the one side look upon Christ as a lawgiver only, and not as a saviour, and so do not evangelise, but legalise Jesus; as the Samaritans had a temple, but they had no ark or mercy-seat; they turn christianity into a mere legislation, while they cry up the rule of the gospel and the example of Christ, but depreciate his merit and satisfaction, do not represent Christ as a fountain of grace. On the other side, some catch at comforts, but neglect Christ as head and lord. Surely a libertine yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. xii. 4, 'We have said with our tongue, We will prevail, our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' The carnal world sticketh at Christ's authority. *Nolumus hunc regnare*: Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to rule over us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be welcome; he may have customers enough for his benefits, for pardon and glory; but men cannot endure to hear of his laws and restraints, that he will be sovereign and chief: Ps. ii. 3, *Disrumpamus lora*, 'Let us break his bonds, and cast away his cords, say they.' The far greatest part of the world is turned libertine, if not in opinion, yet in practice; they would not be under command, and checked in their licentious course of living. They would have Christ as a saviour to bless them, but not as a head to rule and govern them, to require repentance, mortification, and strict walking, and such duties as the world looketh upon as harsh and severe. He must join both together, for Christ is the 'author of eternal salvation to them only who obey him.'

[2.] To make our faith more sincere and entire. It is not a sincere and entire faith, unless we receive Christ with thankfulness and love, as our dearest Lord and saviour, and with our dependence upon his merits, and there be gained a hearty consent of subjection to him as our sovereign Lord and head. We must take him to be what God hath appointed him to be, and accordingly be affected. Men love privileges, but disclaim duties; yet the consent of subjection is of the essence of faith. I remember the prophet saith, Hosea x. 11, 'And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I have passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break the clods.' It was their fashion to thresh their corn by treading it. Now the mouth of the ox that trod out the corn was not to be muzzled. Ephraim liked that work well enough, yet could not endure to harrow and break the clods. Now it is not a regular faith, unless you give Christ the pre-eminence in your hearts, as well as apply his benefits. Where Christ is a saviour he must be a head too. If he save you, neither sin nor Satan must lord it over you. He cureth the distempers of the heart as well as

healeth the wounds of the conscience ; and must recover and possess the heart as chief lord, as well as redeem us from wrath. Would you so divide these two offices, that Christ must redeem you, and Satan govern you ? No ; Christ will do both or none. In short, these two notions do help one another ; his being a saviour doth sweeten our obedience and subjection to him ; and when we look upon him as a lord, requiring such things at our hands, we must not neglect him as a saviour and fountain of grace. To take the law out of the hand of a mediator is very comfortable.

[3.] To help us in the matter in hand, namely, to conceive of the husband's power over the wife. It is an authority mixed with love ; not magisterial and imperious, but a loving government. It is *imperium benignum*, a governing in love ; not tyrannical and rigorous, but loving, gentle, and amiable ; such as a wife may look upon as a mercy to herself, as well as a dignity to her husband. The authority must not be so managed as that the love should disappear ; nor the love so shown as to disown the authority ; as in Christ there is a mixed relation of head and saviour, his government is to do good to the body.

2. I come now to handle these titles severally, and I begin with that of a head, and observe—

*Doct.* That Jesus Christ is the church's head.

I. So it is said, Eph. i. 21, 'He is head over all things to the church.' He is over all things, but head to the church ; the sovereign of the world, but in special relation to his people, as the head to the body : Col. i. 10, 'He is the head of the body, the church.' It is a similitude, but let us see what it importeth.

1. Oneness of nature between him and the church ; for head and members suit. It was a monstrous image that was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, where 'the head was gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet, part of iron and part of clay,' Dan. ii. 32, 33. In every regular body there is a proportion and conformity, and so it is in the mystical body of Christ ; because the brethren took part of flesh and blood, he took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14. The church hath such a head as carrieth conformity with the rest of the members. He and we have one flesh ; and so the godhead, that was at such a distance from us, is brought down in our nature that it might be nearer at hand, and within the reach of our commerce. The same godhead is a fountain of grace, but not a fountain sealed. In our natures it is a fountain opened, and ever-flowing and overflowing for our comfort and use.

2. It implieth an eminency ; for the head is the most eminent part of the body. As it is the noblest, so nature hath placed it nearest heaven. The very situation doth in a manner oblige the other parts to show their reverence. So Christ is the head of the church, infinitely of much more worth than the church, as being the only-begotten Son of God. Not man only, to carry a conformity with us, but God also, that he might be a fountain of life and grace to us : Ps. xlv. 11, 'He is thy God ; worship thou him.' Christ reigneth in heaven with his Father, and from thence vieweth all the necessities of the body, and sendeth forth those influences which are needful to every particular member.



3. The head is the most illustrious throne of the soul ; not only the seat of nerves and senses, but of the memory and understanding ; so there is in Christ a fulness of perfection, enabling him to do all the duties of a head to such a great and necessitous body as the church is : Col. ii. 3, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' They are in our head for the use of the body.

4. It implies authority and power to govern. His excellency giveth him fitness, but authority, right to rule and govern the church ; to appoint officers, and to make laws that shall universally bind all his people. Christ pleadeth this right when he sendeth abroad his officers and ambassadors to proselyte the world, and to require them in his name to repent and believe the gospel : Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth ; go therefore and teach all nations.' He giveth them a commission to make disciples among all nations. The power of disposing all things concerning the church is originally in Christ.

5. It implieth a strict union between him and the church, such as is between the head and members in the natural body ; which union is brought about externally by confederation, or visible owning the covenant, and professing faith in Christ Jesus our Lord : Ps. l. 5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice ;' and Acts viii. 37, 'See here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?' And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' Internally by the Spirit of Christ converting us to God : Rom. viii. 9, 11, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

6. Thence there resulteth a communication of influences ; either—

[1.] Of common gifts to the ministers of the visible church, according to that part which they sustain in the body : Eph. iv. 7, 'But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' A common christian is to be discerned by common grace ; for there is a superficial christianity as well as a real christianity, disciples in name, as well as disciples in deed. All that profess the faith, and are by visible covenanting adopted into Christ's family, are under a visible administration of the covenant of grace ; and he giveth to common christians these gifts of the Spirit which he giveth not to the heathen world ; as knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, abilities of utterance and speech about heavenly things, yea, some affection to these heavenly and spiritual things : Heb. vi. 4, 5, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ;' and the stony ground received the word with joy, Mat. xiii. 20. But either this vanisheth by impatience of the cross, or is overmastered by sensual inclinations. If it continueth, the affection is weakened by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, so that it bringeth nothing to perfection, Luke viii. 13, 14. This doth not prove us true christians, or really in God's special favour, but only visible and professing christians.

[2.] Saving grace or spiritual life, and all those saving benefits which are given to the regenerate or real believers by the Spirit : 1 John iii. 24, 'And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit given unto us.' They have life, and growth, and strength, and saving influence from him, or from the sanctifying Spirit, that produceth and worketh in them life : Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' Growth : Col. ii. 19, 'And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.' Strength : Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' This is undeniable ; without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5. Through him all things, Phil. iv. 12. Nothing savingly, but all things acceptably.

7. It implies sympathy with his members ; there is none of them hurt but it redoundeth to him : Acts ix. 6, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?' All the injuries done to the body affect the head ; the tongue will cry out when the toe is trod upon, You hurt me. So such a near conjunction is there between Christ and his members, that the wrong done to them is done to him ; as, on the other side, the wrong done to Christ is done to the members of the mystical body : Ps. lxix. 9, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.' As nature causeth all members to expose themselves for the preservation of the head, so the head is not unconcerned in the afflictions of his people ; their afflictions are the afflictions of Christ : Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' All that write maxims of policy acknowledge that the prince, being the head of the state, is united with his subjects, and their interests are common ; he that offendeth the subjects wrongeth the prince. This was the reason that Seneca sometimes made use of to sweeten the cruel humour of the emperor Nero, and to instil clemency into the heart of that bloody prince, that he was head of the commonwealth, and that in pardoning others he was pitiful to himself, and in favouring his subjects he was kind to himself. And if we believe him, for a time Nero profited by his advice. If there came an offender before him in the flower of his youth, he pardoned him upon the account of the extravagancy of youth ; if stricken in years, he pardoned his grey hairs, and left death the charge of execution ; if he came of a good house, he respected his birth, and balanced the crime of the person with the services of his ancestors ; if of an obscure family, he contemned the offenders, whose example could not prejudice the commonwealth ; but if nothing else occurred, he pardoned him, and spared himself in the person of the delinquent, considering that he was head of all the people, and suffered by their loss. I have brought this to show you how reasonable it is to conceive that Jesus Christ, who is really united to all his members, and who liveth in them by his Spirit, and they in him by faith, should be sensible of the indignities and wrongs done unto them. Surely he that liveth in the faithful suffereth in all his members.

*Use 1.* If Christ be head of the church—

1. Then there is no other that can usurp and take this honour upon.



him. None can be the head of the church to whom the church is not a body. I ground this argument on the saying of the apostle, Eph. i. 22, 23, 'And gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body.' If the church cannot be said to be the pope's body, the pope cannot be said to be the church's head.

2. None can be a political governing head to the church universal but he who is a mediatorial head, of vital influence to them. I know the papists distinguish of these things, and ascribe one to the pope, and the other to Christ; but the scripture alloweth not this wall of partition. None can be the one but he must be the other. Whenever it speaketh of a political governing head, it speaketh also of a vital influential head: Eph. iv. 15, 16, 'May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love.' Of this, and no other kind of head, doth the scripture speak.

3. A ministerial, universal head, that shall give law to all other churches and christian societies; and if they depend not on him, shall be excluded from the privileges of a christian church. This is, as to matter of right, sacrilege; for this honour is too great for any man, and Christ hath appointed no such head, and therefore it is a manifest usurpation of his royal prerogatives to set up such a head to control his authority without him. And as to matter of fact, it is impossible, the church being scattered throughout all parts of the known world, which can have no commerce with such a head in matters essential to its government and edification.

*Use 2.* Let us make conscience of those duties which this relation bindeth us unto; for if Christ be our head, we must subject ourselves to him, and live by his laws. We preach him a lord: 2 Cor. iv. 5, 'For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.' And our business is to cry up Christ's lordship and sovereign dominion over souls: Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.'

1. You must consent to his lordship. God hath appointed him, and the church hath appointed him, Hosea i. 11. God by authority, and the church by consent. We voluntarily acknowledge his dignity, and submit unto him.

2. This consent must be verified by our constant practice; for Christ is to be owned, not only in word, but in deed also: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' It was a mockage when they cried, 'Hail, king of the Jews,' and spat upon him and buffeted him. Christ will not accept of empty and superficial compliments.

3. This practice and obedience must be such as will become so great a Lord: Col. i. 10, 'Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; that is, the Lord Christ. We must love him, and serve him, and please him in all things; not in a few only, which are not so cross to our minds and wills, but give up an entire universal obedience to all his laws, which are equitable and good, and enforced by the highest motives, and that with the uttermost of our power and strength.

4. You must obey him, not only in his own proper remedial laws, such

as faith and repentance, which concern our recovery, Acts xx. 21, but grow complete in all the will of God. Without repentance our case is not compassionate; without faith we do not own our Redeemer, by whom we have so great a benefit; but also the whole moral law of God falleth with great authority on our consciences. Christ saith expressly, Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' The reason is, because the kingdom of the Mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of God; and this new right of empire is cumulative, not privative; beneficial to us indeed, but not destructive of our duty to God.

5. We must not only mind the fundamental laws of entering into his kingdom, but all the rules and statutes which he appointed for the ordering of his house and family. Christ, that came to repeal the law of Moses, did set up ordinances whereby his church might be kept pure. All his laws concerning these must not be slighted; for his institutions do best preserve his honour in the world. Great charges are left: 1 Tim. v. 2, 'I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things;' 1 Tim. vi. 14, 'Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

*Use 3.* Is comfort to those that are in so near a relation to Christ. He is not only a governing head, but a quickening head; giveth life, and strength, and growth: Eph. i. 22, 'He filleth all in all.' He is not only a commanding head, but a compassionate head; is very tender of the members of his mystical body, sensible of the wrong done to him: Zech. ii. 8, 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.' Injuries or benefits done to them redound to him: Mat. xxv. 45, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.' He not only requireth work, but giveth a recompense; we shall fare as he did, and enter into his glory: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.'

II. I come now to handle the second title, 'He is the saviour of the body.' He must do the part of a saviour as well as a head; and his dominion over the church is exercised in procuring her good and salvation.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The nature of this salvation; (2.) The manner, or the several ways by which Christ doth accomplish it.

First, The nature of it will be known by several distinctions.

1. The notion of a saviour is doubly applied—First, to him that preserveth that which is already made, that it may not perish and return into nothing, or to him that recovereth a thing that is lost out of a state of perdition. In the first sense it is taken Ps. xxxvi. 6, 'Thou savest man and beast;' 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'God is the saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.' There it is taken for the protection of God's daily providence, which the beasts are capable of as well as men, though it extendeth also to the highest angels, who are still preserved in their first estate by the goodness of God. Thus would Adam have been saved if he had kept himself in a state of innocency. The second acceptation is for the recovery of a thing lost;



thus a physician saveth a man, not by preventing the disease, but by curing it, when otherwise it would be mortal ; or as a shepherd saveth a sheep that snatcheth it out of the mouth of the wolf or lion. As a prince that rescueth his captive subjects, and saveth them out of the hands of the enemy, so properly Jesus Christ is our Saviour ; for ' he seeketh and saveth that which is lost,' Luke xix. 10. Our salvation is a recovery and restoration ; we were by nature lost, and there is no way of recovery but by Christ.

2. That salvation is positive and privative. We generally take it in a privative sense and notion. If a person be delivered from an evil likely to befall him, we count him saved. So it is taken Luke i. 71, 'That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.' There it importeth freedom from misery. But this would not content and satisfy Christ ; he would also make us everlastingly happy : John iii. 17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved ;' where it hath a positive sense. So 1 Peter i. 5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ;' meaning thereby not only our deliverance from sin and misery, but our introduction into glory ; as the Lord told Abraham, Gen. xv. 1, 'I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward.'

3. Salvation is either temporal or eternal.

[1.] Temporal salvation, when we are saved from the dangers incident to the present life. In this notion it is taken 1 Peter iii. 20, 'Wherein eight souls were saved by water ;' which can be meant of no other than temporal salvation, for cursed Ham was one of them ; therefore it is meant of safety from the outward judgment. I cannot say but that sometimes we have temporal preservation by the death of Christ. All our common mercies are the fruit of his mediatorial satisfaction. The world would not have stood so long as it doth, nor the wicked enjoy so many forfeited mercies, but in consideration of the death of Christ. But the great salvation which the gospel holdeth forth unto us is eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9, that body and soul may be eternally safe in those blessed mansions which he hath prepared for us. Freedom from the evils of the present life is ascribed to Christ. We need not build a temple, as the heathens did, *Deæ saluti*, to the goddess of safety ; when they were saved and delivered from dangers in their temples, they did offer sacrifices called salvation-offerings. No ; 'Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,' Ps. iii. 8. Christians are taught to direct their praises and thanksgivings to a better object : Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.'

[2.] However, we have a better salvation to wait for besides the mercies of daily providence, even the enjoyment of God and Christ to all eternity ; this is salvation, and this is blessedness. This is the end of our faith, 1 Peter i. 5. Better we had never been born if we have not an interest in this salvation. Alas ! when the pageantry of this world is over, what will it benefit us to have had a little pleasure, honour, or greatness in this life ? to be preserved from temporal dangers, when we are reserved to wrath and judgment to come ? No ; the eternal salvation is that from whence our Saviour is chiefly denomi-

nated, and that we are to endeavour for and look after throughout our whole lives.

4. Eternal salvation is either begun or consummate. Salvation begun is attributed to the grace vouchsafed to us in this life; as the grace of justification or sanctification.

[1.] Justification: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' He speaketh of justification, which is principally by faith, and that salvation which is obtained in this life as soon as we are accepted in Christ and freed from the guilt of sin. So 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which he hath given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' Then we are put in the way of salvation when we are adopted and taken into God's family.

[2.] Sanctification is the other branch of this begun salvation, and indeed a principal branch: Mat. i. 21, 'His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' He hath his name and his office for that use; he doth not only save his people from trouble and temporal misery; yea, not only from hell and damnation, but from their sins; not only from the evil after sin, or *malum naturale*, which is contrary to our interest and happiness, but from *malum morale*, the evil of sin, which is contrary to God's honour and the subjection we owe to him. Christ came to save us from this mainly; which is to be noted against one sort of men, who place our salvation only in privileges and freedom from wrath and obligation to punishment, and scarce allow sanctification the place of an evidence. Oh, no! The chief part of Christ's salvation, and the great work and blessing of the Mediator, is to save us from our sins: Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquity.' On the other hand, many expect pardon and heaven from Christ, and that he doth procure our peace with God, but then think that we are left to work out all the rest ourselves, and so lessen his sanctifying influence, as if it were not so necessary. See Titus iii. 5, 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' It is a great part of his work to accomplish in us the things he requireth of us. That is salvation, to save us from the power of sin as well as the guilt of sin.

Hitherto we have spoken of salvation begun; the consummate and complete salvation is that in heaven, which is the chief good of the creature, and the mark we are to aim at; that which is always in the eye and hope of the godly; yea, which convinced men do so anxiously inquire after: 'What shall I do to be saved?' Acts xvi. 30. It is a state of perfect holiness and perfect blessedness; and woe unto us if we should despise and neglect it: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It is salvation, great salvation, and so great salvation. Those that delight in their lusts, and despise it, what do they do but choose hell for their lusts' sake, and cast off heaven because they will not walk in the way, nor take the pains to get thither, and so wilfully deprive themselves of that life and happiness offered to them?

5. There is a typical saviour and a real Saviour. The people of God of old were mostly acquainted with the typical salvation. Their



hell was Egypt, their heaven was Canaan ; and therefore Moses was their saviour, because he brought them out of Egypt, and Joshua their saviour, because he led them into Canaan ; and their judges were saviours, because they rescued them out of the hands of their temporal enemies : Neh. ix. 27, ' In the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven ; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.' But now the Saviour of the new testament was another manner of saviour, Heb. ii. 10. Jesus doth not free us from Egypt, but from wrath to come : 1 Thes. i. 12, ' To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.' He doth not vanquish Anakims, but the devil ; to deliver us from the hurt and fear of him : Heb. ii. 14, ' That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' He doth not only lead us into Canaan, but into heaven, into a better land of promise.

6. There are some inferior helps or subordinate instruments which are called saviours ; but the Saviour, or the original author of all salvation, is Christ. In temporal deliverances there are instruments which God raiseth up to favour his people and manage their cause against their enemies ; as Obad. ver. 21, ' Saviours shall come up on mount Sion to judge the mount of Esau.' But now, as to spiritual and eternal salvation, Christ hath his apostles and messengers, who instrumentally save the elect : 1 Tim. iv. 16, ' Thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee.' They are the instituted means, the occasion : Phil. i. 19, ' I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' But now as to the original author, or principal cause of salvation, to Christ only, he is *αὐτός*, Heb v. 9, the cause ; we translate it ' the author of salvation.' So Acts iv. 12, ' Neither is there salvation in any other.' So there are no other saviours but Christ only, either total, partial, or collateral. Not total ; for none is like Christ, who is both God and man, and so a fit mediator : 1 Tim. ii. 5, ' There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Not partial ; for Christ saveth to the uttermost : Heb. vii. 25, ' Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' We need not seek our salvation elsewhere ; our salvation cannot be so divided that part should be sought of one and part of another, for then a man might be in part saved and in part damned, if one concur and the other doth not. Nor collateral ; for in the work of reconciliation with God Christ stands alone ; no other cause can be admitted to bear a part, or make his merit more full. As to the grace of impetration, it is clear there is no intercessor ; his arm alone wrought salvation for us, Isa. lix. 16. But as to the grace of application, he employeth subordinate instruments ; having laid the foundation by his death, by his word and Spirit he maketh us capable of salvation, and giveth us a right to it. But the institution is his, the blessing is from him ; therefore, properly speaking, though ministers save, the word saveth, and baptism saveth, yet he is the Saviour.

Secondly, The manner, or the ways and means by which Christ doth

accomplish this salvation for us. Briefly three ways—*satisfactione, merito, et efficacia*.

1. By way of satisfaction, because he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the eternal wrath of God, which are the lets and hindrances of our salvation, and could not otherwise be removed by us. So we are said to be saved by his blood: Rom. v. 9, 'Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' His blood was given as a ransom and atonement to God's justice. He did not only suffer *in bonum nostrum*, for our good; but *loco et vice nostri*, in our stead. He was made sin, made a curse for us, and suffered what we should have suffered if we had been dealt with in our own persons. This being an act of perfect obedience, the Father was satisfied.

2. By his merit, because he procureth to us the favour of God, and a right to all those blessings which are bestowed on the children of God. Christ's death is to be considered not only as a satisfaction for the breach of the old covenant, but as a merit by which the blessings of the new are procured for us, Heb. ix. 15. He doth not only redeem us from the curse of the law, but also doth purchase for us the favour and image of God, and eternal happiness, which is consequent thereupon: 1 Thes. v. 9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' Life was purchased, as well as death, and the curse disannulled.

3. By way of efficacy and power, because by his Spirit he doth effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation. In scripture we are sometimes said to be saved by the death of Christ, and sometimes by the life of Christ; as Rom. v. 10, that is, by the satisfaction and merit of his humiliation, and by the power of his exaltation. He redeemed us before, and by his power he doth effectually apply it. This power is necessary with respect to the party to be saved, and the enemies of our salvation.

[1.] With respect to the party to be saved, which is man, who by a foolish obstinacy is apt to turn back upon his own mercy; and there needeth the power of God to gain his consent, as well as the merit and satisfaction of Christ to reconcile God unto us. There is a mighty power necessary to batter down our unbelief and obstinacy of heart, which is a wall of partition that divideth between God and us, as well as his righteous law which was broken by us; and therefore Christ is said to save us by a strong hand, Col. i. 13, and Rom. xi. 26, 'There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'

[2.] In regard of the enemies of our salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh, whose assaults are so daily and assiduous, and the baits presented so pleasing to our flesh, that the power of God is engaged for our salvation: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God unto salvation.' To keep alive and maintain God's interest in our souls, nothing else, and nothing less can do it.

Use 1. Let us come to Christ for salvation if he be a saviour; for this is his office. All men would be saved, why then is there no more resort and recourse to Christ? This title is not a title of terror and dread, but of hope and comfort. The gospel was appointed to give us notice of it: 1 John. iv. 14, 'We have seen, and do testify, that the



Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Well, then, your first work is to see your necessity because of your sin and misery; for it is an awakening sense of our misery that maketh us prize our remedy. The news of a saviour is welcome to the lost sinner that is in danger of being damned in soul and body for ever. It is with every one of us as it was with Lot in Sodom, fire and brimstone were ready to consume the city; God sends an angel in mercy to him to pull him out, Gen. xix. 12, but he lingered and was loath to depart, ver. 16. Thus it is with every one of us; we are all by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, deserving the eternal wrath of God, which in a little time will be poured out upon us. Oh, let us not refuse our remedy, and neglect the help tendered!

2. Let us believe the truth of this salvation, and how worthy it is of our deepest thoughts: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.' It is not a cunning and well-devised fable; nature will tell you there is a God, and scripture that Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and you have no reason to doubt of it, but to receive the gospel as a true word, considering what was foretold, how Christ demonstrated and evidenced himself to be what he gave out himself to be: Acts v. 31, 32, 'Him hath God exalted to be prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.'

3. Embrace this salvation in Christ's own way and upon his own terms; submit to his sanctifying work, that salvation may be begun in you; submit to his healing methods and terms, and entirely consent to his obedience: Heb. v. 8, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.'

4. Leave not this way till you have the evidence in yourselves: 1 John v. 8, 10, 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' Oh, then, give yourselves to Christ, that you may be saved by him; and leave not waiting on Christ till your hearts can rejoice in him as your Lord and Saviour.

## SERMON XXIX.

*Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.—EPH. v. 24.*

HERE the apostle inferreth the conclusion from the foregoing argument.

In the proposal of this conclusion two things are considerable—

1. The manner how this subjection is to be performed, 'As the church is subject to Christ.'

2. The extent ; unlimited, 'In everything ;' that is, in everything that is lawful and belonging to her duty. Certainly those things which hinder our due subjection to God and Christ are excepted ; as the apostle in another case, 1 Cor. xv. 29, 'When he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he is excepted that hath put all things under him.' There are cases excepted by a superior law. In Luke xiv. 26, it is said, 'If a man hate not father and mother, wife and children, he cannot be my disciple.' We still go on with the pattern. The point is this—

*Doct.* That those that belong to Christ as his people do willingly and sincerely subject themselves to his government.

I speak of the regenerate and true members of the church. Others are subject to him outwardly ; they sincerely.

1. Let us state the nature of the subjection of the church to Christ.

2. Give the reasons of it.

In stating the subjection to Christ, we must consider—(1.) The foundation ; (2.) The nature ; (3.) The properties of it.

First, The foundation is Christ's authority. The primitive sovereign is God ; the sovereign by derivation is Christ the mediator, in his manhood united to the second person of the godhead. He is Lord, not as creator but redeemer, which kind of authority accrue to him by his own merit and purchase : Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' It was the fruit and consequent of the humiliation of the Son of God. And also by God's grant : Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ ;' made, that is, appointed or ordained. Concerning it observe two things—

1. It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as creator. This new dominion and sovereignty is not destructive of the former, but accumulative. It did not abolish God's right by the creation, for that continued still, and will continue whilst man receiveth his being from God, and the continuance of his being by providential preservation. This therefore is superadded to the former by the new title of a redeemer : Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' This authority is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but subordinate. Though Christ's office as head of the church be the greatest and highest that ever was, above all angels and creatures, next to God, therefore Christ's place upon his investiture and solemn inauguration was at the right hand of the eternal throne of God, yet it is derived from God, and referred to him. Derived from God ; for this power was given to him : Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth.' A power to make new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. And it is referred and subordinated to God : Phil. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' The supreme right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him is not vacated, but reserved and established on more comfortable terms.

2. This authority and dominion which the Redeemer is possessed of



is comfortable and beneficial to us ; and the end and effect of it was our cure and recovery. God had a full right to govern us, which could not be disannulled by man's sin ; and it was so great that it cannot be greater : but it was not comfortable to us fallen and alienated from God ; for it was such a right as a prince hath over his rebels to punish them. We renounced God's service, and forfeited that interest which we had in his gracious government. Therefore was this new interest set on foot to save and recover us to God, that his right in us and over us might be comfortable to us ; therefore Christ's government and authority is spoken of in scriptures as medicinal and restorative, such as conduceth to make peace between God and man, that we may again enjoy his favour : Acts x. 36, 'The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.' Also to reduce men to the obedience of God : Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new Lord hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, and their duty and obedience to him, granting thereby free pardon and right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him ; which consideration doth mightily enforce obedience, because it is a beneficial law we are under.

Secondly, The nature of this subjection. It consisteth of two things—

- (1.) Our willing and hearty consent to become subjects to Christ ;
- (2.) Our actual obedience to his commands.

1. Our willing and hearty consent to become subjects to Christ. This is the same with our being christians, when we yield up ourselves to Christ to become his people : 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God ;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' When the will consenteth, they are christians. And it is solemnly done in baptism, when God is taken to be our God, and we give up ourselves to be his people ; and when Christ is taken to be our saviour, we give up ourselves to be his members and redeemed ones, and we take him as our chief governor, giving up ourselves to be his subjects. Mark the phrases : Exod. xx. 3, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' It importeth accepting, receiving, owning Christ as our Lord and redeemer. What the having God for our God doth imply, that having Christ for our Lord and redeemer doth imply also ; that implieth subjection and dependence, so doth this ; so that this subjection is necessary to christianity itself, or our entering into the covenant of grace.

2. Actual obedience is the fruit of it ; and it implieth the strict and ready performance of all commanded duties, for therein we show the reality of our consent : Rom. vi. 16, 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness ?' Mark, he doth say, His servants ye are whom ye obey ; not whom you consent to obey : certainly that is our lord and master upon

whom we bestow our service, time, and obedience. God's servants are so, not only by consent or open profession and express covenant, but it is verified and made good by a constant continual obedience. They do not only make covenant, but keep covenant with God. Besides consent, there is practice, or strict obedience to all the duties required of them.

Thirdly, The properties of this subjection and obedience.

1. It is a willing subjection and obedience: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.' They voluntarily submit themselves to the Son of God as their prophet, lord, and sovereign. There is a passive subjection and a voluntary submission. A passive subjection; so all creatures at all times are under the power of the Son of God and our redeemer; and amongst the rest, the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels, are not exempted from this dominion; he hath a ministry and service for them to do, as well as the good angels: Phil. ii. 10, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' But then, by voluntary submission, those only are subjects, and admitted into his kingdom, who wholly and willingly give up themselves to God their redeemer, that they may be saved on his own terms, and in the way that God hath appointed. The devil and wicked men are his subjects against their wills; whether they will or no they are subject to him; but all Christ's people are his by their own consent, to be guided and ordered by him. And as the subjection is voluntary, so is the obedience and service, which is the fruit thereof. It is not enough compulsorily to render Christ some unwilling services, but their obedience must be willing, ready, pleasant: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' It must be done not only out of a sense of his authority, but out of love to him. Many may do what he commandeth, but they had rather leave it undone; they have no delight in the work; this doth not become subjection to Christ. A beggar is glad of your alms whether you give it with a good or ill will, because he needeth it; but Christ hath no need of you and your service. We give it to him, not because he needeth it, but because he deserveth and requireth it; and so it must be voluntarily, not by constraint or fear, but love.

2. It is a thankful subjection and obedience. The design of God in the work of redemption was to lay a foundation of the highest thankfulness; therefore the obedience to our redeemer must be a thankful obedience. A mere law, as a law, requireth obedience; but a benefit, as a benefit, requireth thankfulness. Therefore the gospel, which is called 'a law of faith,' Rom. iii. 27, requireth obedience; and as it is a benefit (1 Tim. vi. 2, 'Partakers of the benefit'), the greatest that can be given to mankind, requireth thankfulness. Join both notions together, and then you will see it is a thankful obedience we are called unto. Thankfulness doth not discharge us of obedience, but constrain us to it most powerfully and sweetly. The first subjection is an act of gratitude, as well as an acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty and power: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living



sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Christ was made a sin-offering and we a thank-offering. Our constant obedience is a thankful return of God's love: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us;' 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.' Love is at the bottom of all our duties. Duties are best sweetened by love.

3. This subjection must be constant unto the death: Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Faithfulness relateth either to a trust committed, and so we are to use all the gifts given us by God to his glory. With respect to God's free giving, they are *donæ Dei*, gifts of God freely bestowed. With respect to our receiving or using, so they are *talenta nostra*, talents put into our hands faithfully to be employed by us for his use and service. As when money is given to a beggar, we expect nothing from him, but when money is delivered to a factor, we expect a faithful improvement of it; so, 'Be thou faithful to the death;' still employ your time and strength for God. Some are thankful for a gift, but unfaithful in a talent. Or else faithfulness relateth to a covenant made with Christ, or our troth plighted to him in baptism; so, 'Be faithful;' that is, stand to your baptismal vow and engagement. A breach of God's law, as a law, is disobedience; but a breach of his covenant is treachery, or a violation of our faith so solemnly engaged to him. Lastly, the word implieth trials; it is easy to be good in the absence of temptations; but we are not said to be faithful till we are thoroughly put to trial. When we cast off our fidelity to Christ, either for some great earthly hope, or shrink out of some great fear, we are not faithful to Christ. Now no other term is assigned but death; for then our trial is over, and till then we must keep up our subjection to him whatever it costs us; for we must not measure our obedience to him by temporal accidents. No; his will must be our constant law and rule, not our own interests; and we must deny ourselves to please Christ or else we may be said to be good for a while, but not faithful when we are put to it.

4. Our subjection must be dutiful, and with great reverence. We serve a lord that is not to be dallied withal, and therefore we must not serve him by the by, and with a little superficial service, or such as the flesh can well spare, but with all our soul, might, and strength: Heb. xii. 28, 29, 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.' Mark how he inferreth the duty from our receiving the kingdom; that is, our submitting to the power and laws of this new sovereign, God the redeemer. There are some that refuse the kingdom: Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Others receive the kingdom; that is, submit themselves to Christ as their king and lawgiver by a voluntary submission to him; which is either a duty: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God;' or a benefit: Col. i. 13, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of

his dear Son : in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' Now these that have thus received the kingdom, what are they to be and do? To serve him with reverence and godly fear. Having submitted to his power, they must actually obey his laws, and that with great care and exactness. A boldness in sinning and a coldness in duty is a great depreciation of his majesty ; and the reason is, because no terror is comparable to his frowns, no comfort comparable to his smiles, or a sense of his love. The former the apostle meaneth, for our God is a 'consuming fire.' Some corruption remaineth in the faithful, and we need holy fear to guard our love ; and therefore there must be a constant care to please him ; such a walking as Christ may accept, and we may not lose the comfort of the grace of the new covenant.

5. Our subjection must be universal and unlimited, having respect to all his commandments, Ps. cxix. 6, and Col. iv. 12, 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' It is not enough to do some things required by Christ, but the church must be regulated by him in all things. It was a saying of Calvin, *Si dimidio Christi contenti essemus, facile transigeremus omnia*—If we would be contented with a little of Christ, we should soon despatch our business. The world will yield to a little of Christ ; they will prize his name when they neglect his office ; they will embrace the outward form of his religion when they hate the power ; they will value and esteem and desire his benefits, but they despise his laws ; they will attend upon external duties, but neglect private or inward acts of grace ; they will seem to acknowledge the general duties, but as to particulars questioned or assaulted in the age they live in, they desire to be excused ; but a gracious heart reverenceth everything that carrieth the stamp of Christ upon it, and in everything desires to submit to him. I confess, where men are not convinced of particular duties they may be accepted of God, where they are faithful in the general and unquestionable duties ; but we cannot say so of them who blind their eyes out of malice and prejudice.

II. I shall give the reasons of it ; though they be evident already in stating the nature of this subjection, yet I shall add more.

1. Because obedience is the best impression or stamp of our religion upon us. In the christian religion Christ is set forth, not only as our lord and ruler, of sovereign authority, but also a perfect pattern and example commended to our imitation. This reason is urged by the apostle : Heb. v. 8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered : and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' Christ's submission to his Father in the hardest duties, and his obeying him at the dearest rates, is made one ground why obedience is required of us, that head and members may be all of a piece : Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross.' Though he was God, equal with the Father, and so above all law given to man, yet did he take upon him the yoke of obedience, and submitted not only to the same laws that we are governed by, but also to the special law of a



mediator, to undergo a shameful, painful, and accursed death. That, which was most remarkable in his sufferings, and in the whole course of his life, was obedience. Now this is true religion, to imitate what we worship, and to obey Christ as Christ obeyed God. What better expression of gratitude can we show to him who was consecrated through grievous afflictions, and unknown pains and sufferings, to the end that he might be our faithful and compassionate high priest? This doctrine laid to our hearts will bring forth the like obedience and affection towards him that he showed to the Father for our sakes.

2. This obedience is the qualification of those that shall have benefit by Christ. That is evident in the same chapter: ver. 9, 'He is the author of eternal salvation to those that obey him.' On the contrary, vengeance is threatened on those 'that obey not the gospel,' 2 Thes. i. 8.

But you will say, If this be so, then what is become of faith and repentance, which everywhere in scripture are said to give us title to the privileges of the gospel?

I answer—Obedience is sometimes taken largely, and sometimes strictly.

[1.] Largely, as comprehending both faith and repentance, and other duties required of us in the gospel; and so faith and repentance is a part of obedience, as well as those other duties that God by that name hath commanded; for God, that hath commanded us to live holily, hath required of us also to repent and believe in Christ; and so repentance is obedience and faith obedience. Faith is so called in many places: Rom. x. 16, 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?' So Rom. i. 5, 'We have received apostleship for the obedience of faith among all nations;' Rom. xvi. 26, 'The mysteries of the gospel are made manifest for the obedience of faith;' that is, that we may submit ourselves to God through Christ. So Acts vi. 7, 'Many of the priests were obedient to the faith;' that is, entertained the belief of the gospel. So repentance is obedience; for often impenitency is opposed to obedience: Isa. i. 19, 20, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and be rebellious, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' Thus it is taken largely.

[2.] Strictly, as it is distinct from faith and repentance; and so we say that our right to the privileges of the gospel is begun by faith and repentance, and continued by new obedience. Yea, we say further, that obedience may be taken either for the first consent and purpose of subjection to Christ; and so it is the same with faith and repentance, or entering into covenant with God; or it may be taken for our actual performance of the duties required by Christ, and so it is a fruit of faith and repentance.

(1.) The consent of obedience is implied in the nature of faith and repentance; as in the marriage covenant we consent to the duties belonging to that relation. That it is implied in the nature of repentance is plain, because it is a turning from sin to God. Now none are turned to God in heart but those that are ready and willing to obey him. For faith, take it for assent to the doctrine of the gospel, it is the sum of things to be believed and done. We believe the command-

ments, as well as the mysteries of salvation : Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have believed thy commandments ;' that is, we believe that they are of God, and require our obedience. Now though laws are not presently obeyed because we believe them to be the king's laws, yet that belief is a sense of our obligation to obey. Consider the gospel in the form of a covenant : Acts ii. 41, 'They received the word gladly.' Now the word and covenant of God offereth privileges for our happiness, and requireth duty for our work ; we assent both to the one and the other, and so subjection is implied. Take it for our acceptance of Christ ; so we receive him as Lord as well as saviour : Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' With a hearty consent of subjection to him, as well as to enjoy the privileges and immunities of his kingdom. Take it for our dependence and reliance on God's mercy ; still they are joined : Ps. cxix. 166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' It is presumption to look for a thing in a way wherein God will never grant it. A man that sinneth away his peace can have no more confidence in Christ than one that goeth and woundeth himself can expect to be without pain.

(2.) Take it for actual obedience ; without it naked faith is of little use to seal and confirm our great privileges to us. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'Can faith save him ?' James ii. 14 ; that is, naked faith, destitute of obedience. Therefore when the scripture saith, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved,' the meaning is, believe so as faith may produce its proper fruit ; as he that is to entertain a king will make reckoning of his train. There is no getting rid of doubts and fears till faith produce this subjection to Christ.

*Use.* To persuade all to subject yourselves to Christ, if you would not be such members of the church as a wooden leg is of the body, but firm and living members.

1. Consider whom it is we call you to obey : Jesus Christ, who—

[1.] Hath sovereign authority to command, as he gave good evidence in the days of his flesh ; for the whole course of nature obeyed him : Mat. viii. 27, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and seas obey him ?' These are creatures that seem less liable to check and control, yet they retreat at his rebuke, and lay down their proud blasts and waves. The angels are all at his beck ; the good angels ministered to him in his lowest estate. If we expect to be like them for privileges, we should be like them for duties also. The bad angels : Mark i. 27, 'For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' Now shall winds and seas, angels and devils, obey Christ, and shall man refuse his empire and sovereignty ? Oh, yield up yourselves to the Lord, and stand out no longer.

[2.] This Jesus is your saviour, and shall he not be your Lord ? He that obeyed even to the death for your sakes that you might be made righteous, Rom. v. 19, bore that wrath that was due to his people for their disobedience, let him command what he will, you should not grudge at it.

[3.] It is Christ who hath set us so perfect a copy, and first obeyed himself, and put his own neck under the yoke, that we might obey him the more patiently. Now would Christ come down from heaven to set us a



pattern, he that was God's equal would be his subject, and will you refuse the obedience to which Christ himself hath submitted? He became a living precept to us, religion exemplified, a visible commentary upon God's laws. Now the disciple is not above his lord, John xiii. 14. Christ hath performed all that was enjoined him to do and suffer; therefore let us imitate him in his humility, self-denial, cheerfulness, and delight to do the will of God.

2. Consider wherein we are to obey him; in things just and equal. He doth not burden us with needless laws, which have no respect to our good and safety. Besides the great remedial laws of faith and repentance, which are necessary to our recovery to God, what hath he required of us but 'to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?' Titus ii. 12. Soberly with respect to ourselves. He that liveth holily hath much the sweeter life than he that liveth sensually, and walloweth in all uncleanness and excess. Righteously with respect to our neighbours, without which the world would be a den of thieves, or a public stage whereon to act all manner of villany, and we could have no security of anything we have. We would have others live justly and peaceably with us, and what more just and equal than to do so ourselves, to give every one his due, and supply them that need? So godly, loving God, trusting in God, delighting ourselves in God, and worshipping him according to his own order, and entertaining a constant communion with him by prayer and praise. These duties bring their own pleasure and sweetness along with them. Now, as Naaman's servant reasoned, 2 Kings v. 13, 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?' So in this case; when such necessary things are required of us, should not we seriously set about them?

3. Consider why this obedience is required. Christ doth not rule us for our hurt and ruin, but for our conduct.<sup>1</sup> His conduct and government is to lead us to eternal life, and when you disobey him, you forsake your own happiness. The pilot governeth the ship to bring it to its haven, the physician governeth his patient to procure his health, the father governeth the children for their better education, the husband governeth the wife for her benefit; so doth Christ govern the church, that he may make it a glorious church. It is for your happiness: Isa. i. 19, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;' Exod. xix. 5, 'Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' In short, obey him, and he will give you his Spirit: Acts v. 32, 'So also is the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him.' Obey him, and he will give you peace of conscience: Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls.' Obey him, and he will give you glory and eternal salvation: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.'

Use 2. To persuade the people of God to live in a more perfect and exact obedience to his will.

1. It is more perfidious for you to disobey him, that have given up yourselves by a serious covenant made with God, renouncing sin, and

devoting yourselves to the will of God : 1 Peter i. 14, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance ;' 1 Peter iv. 2, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' This covenant and promise of obedience you have often renewed at sacraments and at other times, and shall all these bonds and cords be too weak to hold you to your duty ?

2. You have received the sanctifying Spirit, and begun this work : 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your hearts to the obedience of the truth.' He is become a principle of life to you, and therefore it is more unnatural for you to sin : 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Others offer violence to their duty, but you to your nature.

3. You make a profession of being in relation to Christ as your Lord, and therefore you should live in a strict obedience to his holy will : Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ?'

4. You know what the will of God is more than others, and therefore, if you disobey it, you will be beaten with many stripes : Luke xii. 47, 48, 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes ; but he that did not know, shall be beaten with few stripes.'

5. You have found him a saviour ; and therefore you should not stick to obey him as a lord. You have tasted of his mercy, and how gracious he is, 1 Peter ii. 3, not only in your first conversion, when he called you and passed by others, but in his daily rewarding bounty, having found the comforts and benefits that attend a course of obedience : Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law.' Therefore you should be more eminent in serving the Lord. Upon all these considerations you should more watch against sin, and be more exact in the service of Christ.

We have seen the pattern ; Christ the pattern of the husband's pre-eminence, the church the pattern of the wife's subjection. Now it is easy to accommodate these things.

First, The husband is the head of the wife.

1. As the head is more eminent than the rest of the members of the body, so there is an eminency and superiority in the husband because of his sex : 1 Cor. xi. 3, 'The head of the woman is the man, and the head of the man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.' Man is superior in dignity and authority, as the head is above the body.

2. As the head hath power over the body to rule it and direct it, so it noteth his authority and power of government.

3. As the head is the seat of the senses and understanding, so the husband should be furnished with some complete measure of knowledge and prudence : 1 Peter iii. 7, 'Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge,' as a man of knowledge, that they may not only be able to know their own duty, but instruct their wives : 'Let them ask their husbands at home,' 1 Cor. xiv. 35 ; and he is called 'the guide of her youth.'

4. The husband hath such a power over the wife as the head hath



over the members. We must not forget the near connection that is between head and members; that the wife is his own flesh; the authority is so mutual, that the wrong that is done to her is done to himself.

*Use 3. Direction to husbands.*

1. They ought to resemble Christ, whose image they bear—

[1.] In other things as well as in point of superiority; holiness, self-denial, love, and all sorts of duty. Look, as it aggravateth the faults of magistrates, *dixi, dii estis*, 'I have said ye are gods,' Ps. lxxxvi. 2. God hath put the image of his superiority upon them; but if those be not the image of his wisdom, purity, and holiness, they join together the image of God and a beast, a drunken god and a wanton god. So the husband is head of the wife; but if the husband be ignorant, furious, frothy, incontinent, intemperate, little of Christ will be seen in him.

[2.] In using and employing their dignity and power suitable to the ends of their relation. Christ, that is the head of the church, is also the saviour of the body. In some sense he treateth his mystical body with more kindness than the natural: Rom. xiv. 3, 'He pleased not himself;' Heb. x. 5, 6, 'Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not; but a body thou hast prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.' Therefore he gave his own natural body as a sacrifice: ver. 10, 'We are sanctified through the body of Christ once offered for all.'

2. If the husband, by being the head of the wife, bear Christ's image, then this image must not be defaced nor despised.

[1.] Not be defaced by the husband by impertinent commands. If they would have that submission and respect from inferiors, they must carry their government prudently and lovingly. Then it is most a similitude of Christ's authority over the church; Christ doth not burden his church with needless laws.

[2.] Not despised by the woman. All superiors have a piece of the image of Christ put upon them, therefore they must not be contemned by their inferiors, lest thereby they despise and condemn the image of God. If Jacob could say, Gen. xxxiii. 10, 'I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me;' he saw God in his kindness and reconciliation; so here.

Secondly, The wife's subjection, 'As the church is subject to Christ.' Where observe the manner—(1.) Negatively, not merely for their own ease, peace, and credit, but in conscience of and respect to that dignity God hath put on her husband. He hath placed him above her. (2.) Positively.

1. It is a righteous subjection, not a slavish, but so as that her authority may be kept up over her children and servants.

2. It must be a willing subjection, not grudging; either obeying the harder commands, or avoiding them with humility and reverence.

3. It is a dutiful subjection, for so is the church to Christ out of gratitude, and this in a sweet loving way.

Now, for motives to stir you up to this duty, consider—(1.) It is necessary; the same obligation which is upon the church to obey

Christ lieth upon the woman to obey her husband. (2.) It is profitable; as for the church to be subject to Christ, so for wives to be subject to their husbands.

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### SERMON XXX.

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*—EPH. v. 25.

IN all exhortations the balances must be kept equal, that we may not too much depress one party and extol and lift up the other. Therefore in one scale the apostle puts the duty of the wife, in the other the duty of the husband. We are very inquisitive what others should be and do to us, but overlook what we ourselves should be and do to others. The apostle is more just and equal. The inferiority of the wife to the husband must not be so pressed and urged as if the man were under no relation to her, and owed her no duty and respect. No; religion provideth a recompense, that there may be an equality, and establishes the duty of the husband to the wife, as well as the duty of the wife to the husband, as a compensation of her submission. There is on his part required love: 'Husbands, love your wives,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A precept, 'Husbands, love your wives.' As the woman is bound to obedience, so the man to love.

2. The reason, taken from Christ's example, 'Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.' Where take notice of two things—

[1.] The inward affection, he 'loved the church.'

[2.] The outward effect and demonstration of it, he 'gave himself for it.'

The text will give us occasion to speak of two things—

(1.) The love of the husband to the wife.

(2.) The love of Christ to the church. For the first, let us fix this point—

*Doct.* That husbands must love their wives with a sincere and tender love.

1. Let us state this love which is due from the husband to the wife.

2. See by what reasons it may be enforced.

I. In stating and defining this love, I will take notice—(1.) Of the general nature of it; (2.) The degree; (3.) The effects.

First, The general nature of love is the delectation and complacency of the heart in the party loved, from whence followeth a desire of their good, and a seeking and promoting of it to the uttermost of our power. So the husband must love the wife, that his heart may cleave to her, and take delight in her; as it is said, Gen. xxxiv. 19, 'The young man had a delight in Jacob's daughter.' Then when the heart



is thus inclined, their good is desired; and not only so, but there is an endeavour to the uttermost to procure it and bring it about; this is love, for love is seen by labour: Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love.' This love must be operative, as Christ loved the church; not in word, but in deed; and therefore love must incline them to do all the good they can, both in soul and body. They must be as careful for their good, as Christ was of his church's benefit.

Secondly, The degree.

1. There is a common love which belongeth to believers of either sex, as brothers and sisters in Christ: John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' That love hath the same pattern, but differeth from this; for this is a special conjugal love, such as no other may share in. One ingredient in this love is our communion in the same faith, as they are all one in Christ whether male or female, Gal. iii. 28. Though christianity doth not abolish those distinctions which are between master and servant, and the distinction of the one sex above the other, yet they all have the same communion in the merits and grace of Christ. They make up one mystical spiritual body, whereof Christ is the head and husband, as being heirs of the same grace of life, 1 Peter iii. 7. Because of their equality in partaking in spiritual and eternal privileges, the wife is no less dear to God than themselves are. But this is another kind of love, because of their marriage covenant and bond, whereby they bind themselves to love one another with such a love that none else may share in it: Hosea iii. 3, 'Thou shalt not be for another man, so also will I be for thee.'

2. It is alone, which in some respects exceedeth that we owe to our parents and other near relations: Gen. ii. 24, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife.' The bond of natural affection, which bindeth fast parents and children, is wonderful strong and near; it is an adamant chain, more strong than iron. We see this love and natural affection is very great and forcible, even in dumb creatures, which are led thereunto by instinct of nature; and if it should not be in men endued with reason, they would be worse than beasts. Moses would have them stoned to death, Deut. xxi. 21; and Solomon saith of such unnatural children, that 'the ravens of the valleys shall pick out their eyes, and the young eagles shall eat it,' Prov. xxx. 17; that is, they shall lie unburied. But though this bond be so strong, yet God preferreth the bond of marriage before it. They may leave father and mother, that is, be divided from them in habitation and daily conversation, which is not permitted to man and wife. Dutiful affection to parents is never to cease, and upon all emergent occasions we must be helpful to them. But for cleaving to one another, not only by a firm and constant affection, but daily and pleasing converse, this is peculiar to this relation. Father and mother are nearest in respect of nature, of whom we came, and whom we ought to serve; but as to inseparable converse, father and mother must be left for the wife's sake. Not that it is lawful for us to forsake our parents who brought us forth and bred us up,

or to set light by them ; this is brutish disobedience. God's rule, *non extinguit affectum sed ordinat*, doth not free us from our duty, but dispose it aright. Rather forsake father and mother than forsake the wife. It is God's will that the bond of love between married folks should be perferred before all other bonds, that the knot of marriage might be more surely knit, and the delight of love thence resulting should be the greatest and most perfect.

3. It carrieth it higher yet. They ought to 'love their wives as their own bodies ; for he that loveth his wife, loveth himself,' ver. 28. There is an innocent self-love which is at the bottom of all our labours : Prov. xvi. 26, 'He that laboureth, laboureth for himself ; for his mouth craveth it of him ;' that is, bodily necessities being urgent upon us, require that we should be exercised in some honest function, calling, or course of living, that we may have for the sustentation of the body. A man loveth his children *tanquam aliquid sui*, as part of himself ; but he loveth his wife *tanquam semet ipsum*, as himself, for they twain are one flesh. How so ? Not only *fictione juris*, in supposition or account of law, as a man and his wife are reputed one person ; nor only one flesh by matrimonial conjunction, as I Cor. vi. 16 ; nor only one flesh in their issue, in which the substance of both parents concurrereth to make up the body of the child ; but one flesh by inseparable union, which during the lives of the married persons cannot be dissolved but in case of adultery, and the malicious desertion of the unbelieving party ; therefore a man is bound to love her as himself.

4. As Christ loved the church. The husband for his pattern of conjugal love is referred to Christ, partly for the degree of his love, and partly for the kind of it.

[1.] The degree. Christ expresseth that love to the church than which greater cannot be expressed. The wonder of his condescending love is the great argument of the gospel, and the great means to reconcile the alienated and estranged world to God. Therefore if the husband would have the wife obedient unto him as to the Lord, he must love her as the Lord doth the church. It was a bold and blunt speech of Luther, *Nihil video in hoc Christo, nisi prodigalitatem quandam amoris*—I see nothing in Christ but a prodigality and excess of love. This is that which we christians admire, and for which we shall adore God and bless him to all eternity ; even for Christ, and the great love wherewith he loved us. All this is commended to the husband as his pattern of love and tenderness to the wife.

[2.] The kind of it. The degree would be enough pressed if the apostle should say no more but 'He loved the church and gave himself for it ;' but the kind is also intended, for he amplifieth it in the 26th verse : 'He gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word.' Christ's love was a sanctifying love. Surely when he was upon the cross he wanted not wisdom, nor love, nor merit. Not wisdom to choose, nor love to intend, nor merit to purchase the greatest blessings for us. Not wisdom to choose ; for he that is the wisdom of the Father knoweth how to value things according to their order and proportion ; and he thought no blessing greater or fitter for us than holiness, which is the glory of



God, the beauty of God himself, for God is glorious in holiness, Exod. xv. 11. Nor did he want love, for then he was in the exercise of the highest act and fervency of it: John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;' Rom. v. 8, 'But God commended his love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.' And therefore surely he intended the highest benefits to us, and most necessary for our happiness. Now he intended not greatness and wealth, but conformity and likeness to God. Neither wanted he merit and worth enough to procure of his Father the choicest blessings, for it was the precious blood of him that was God: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' What could be too dear for the blood of God to purchase? Now that which Christ aimed at was to sanctify and cleanse his people from sin, which doth not only set forth the value of holiness, but doth teach husbands how to express their love to their wives, in being meet helps to them in the best things. Nothing was better and greater in the eye of Christ to procure for us; which is a check and reproof to them that seek to gratify the flesh by marriage, but not to improve this intimate converse and near friendship for the great uses of christianity.

5. Shall we go higher? Indeed higher we cannot go, all things considered; but yet there is one expression to be taken notice of, and that is in Prov. v. 19, 'Be thou ravished always with her love.' In the margin it is, 'Err thou always in her love.' The Septuagint renders it, *ἐν τῇ ταύτης φιλίας συμπεριφερόμενος πολλοστός ἔσῃ*, 'Being encompassed with her love, thou shalt be overmuch in it.' The law of God is holy, and alloweth not the least vitiosity, either by way of defect or excess. All love of the creature must be guarded and kept within rules. Yet I take notice that the expressions of scripture do countenance an excess rather than a defect; that is, as *minus malum*; and I understand it with two references—(1.) Rather than be defective, delight thyself with her, as a man useth to delight himself in a thing that is lawful, and forgets himself in it. (2.) Rather than to err in the love of a strange woman, ver. 20. I press it not beyond its bounds, but I show what weight the scripture puts upon the husband's love to the wife.

Thirdly, The effects of it.

1. Delight in her presence and company; not suffering himself to be separated from her for any long time, unless it be for necessary cause. Abroad he is out of his sphere; at home there is where he should be. Though the married ought to bear one another's absence for a while, yet it is not to be endured that a man should wilfully consort with others rather than his wife. Christ never deserts his church, but is always with her: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'And lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.' This is the husband's pattern. Cheerful converse or delight in her company as the necessary fruit of his love: Prov. v. 18, 19, 'Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times.' By these expressions he sheweth how husband and wife should take pleasure in each other, and take heed that there be

no occasion of loathing and disdain. Those that find more pleasure in converse abroad than at home certainly do not heartily love one another, though no filthy and prohibited act should ensue from this liberty which they take.

2. The second act or effect of love is, to direct and instruct in all things that belong to this life and a better, for therefore he is called 'a head;' and the office of the head is to guide the body. The light of nature taught heathens to instruct the wife in things concerning this life, that they might be a help to them in family government; but the light of scripture calleth for a higher duty, to instruct her in things of godliness and religion, that, worshipping God together in this life, they may together enjoy him in the life to come: 1 Cor. xiv. 35, 'If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home;' 1 Peter iii. 7, 'Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge;' knowledge of duty, according to which a christian's life and actions should be governed and ordered. A great deal of prudent care and spiritual wisdom is to be used in conversing with them, that they may instruct them in their duty toward God, which is the highest and truest love.

3. In providing all things necessary for them that conduce to health, food and raiment, and that according to the decency and decorum of their estate; for herein they imitate the care and providence of Christ, who hath provided all things for his spouse; food for their souls, garments of salvation to cover their nakedness, healing grace to cure their distempers. So must the husband do for his wife. Jacob said, Gen. xxx. 30, 'Now when shall I provide for mine own house also?' We must provide for our own house, otherwise we incur that censure, 1 Tim. v. 8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Certainly the wife must be comforted, cherished, and encouraged; for among our own she is chief. Those beastly prodigals that never provide for their families, but consume what is provided by the wife's care, spending all they can come at in whoring, playing, eating, drinking, never caring what becometh of wife and children, they neither have the love of husbands, nor the faith of christians, nor the nature of men, and are worse than the brute beasts; they neither give their wives honour, 1 Peter iii. 7, nor decent maintenance, which they are obliged to, 1 Tim. v. 8.

4. In a care to preserve and defend her; as Abraham had a care of Sarah, Gen. xx., and David of his wives when they were taken captives, 1 Sam. xxx. 4, 5. But it is endless to run into particulars.

II. Let us now see by what reasons this is enforced.

1. The order of the creation. We pleaded that before for the woman's submission, that she was made out of man, after man, and for man. We plead the same argument now for the husband's duty of love to her; for the apostle urgeth this in the same chapter, 1 Cor. xi. 11, 12. The former arguments were urged 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9, 'For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' Now let us see what he saith for the woman: ver. 11, 12, 'Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in



the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God.' The meaning is, though the woman was made out of man, or framed or formed out of Adam's rib, yet all the sons of Adam are born, conceived, and propagated by women, and by man and woman united by God, from whom all things are; and therefore she ought to have her honour and love as well as the man, being both created by God. Add hereunto, that Jesus Christ hath honoured them in taking flesh of a woman, and not of man, therefore the man must not wax proud and insolent, nor the woman be grieved; or the husband must not abuse that superiority which God hath given him over his wife by harsh domineering and bitter carriage, but sweeten the yoke of subjection laid upon the wife by love.

2. It is a relation of love, instituted by God for that very end and purpose.

[1.] Friendship is necessary for man, because he is ζῶον πολιτικόν, a sociable creature, not made to live alone, but in company with others. Solomon telleth us, Eccles. iv. 9-12, 'Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.' The Egyptians in their hieroglyphics express the unprofitableness of a solitary man by a single millstone, which alone grindeth no corn, but with its fellow is very serviceable. Thus God appointed men to live in society, that they may be mutually helpful to one another.

[2.] Though man affects society, yet in our company we must use choice. The good will best converse and suit with the good; for love and friendship is very much founded in suitableness. The godly have special love to the godly: Ps. cxix. 63, 'I am a companion of them that fear thee and keep thy precepts.' Doves will not flock with the ravens, and it is unnatural when divers kinds are intermixed.

[3.] Though there be a love to all that fear God, yet some must be chosen for our intimacy. Our Lord Christ sanctified holy friendship: Mat. xvii. 1, 'Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain;' Mat. xxvi. 37, 'And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.' And when he raised Jairus's daughter, Luke viii. 51, 'He suffered no man to go in save Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden.' They were ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι, the most choice of those that he chose.

[4.] The truest friendship and love is *inter bonos*, between those that are good. So John is especially called the disciple whom Jesus loved, that is, above all the rest: John xiii. 23-25, 'Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?'

[5.] Of all persons, the two that love most sincerely are husband and wife, who solemnly chose each other as a meet help in the Lord, that they may bear a part in each other's burdens, and by the laws of God and man do mutually give up themselves to each other to seek one

another's good, and are so fast linked to each other that they cannot part. Therefore surely there should be the highest love between them both ; for they are brought together for this end.

[6.] Because women are ordinarily affectionate and passionate creatures, apt to love much where nature and grace bindeth them ; and man is, or is presumed to be, more governed by reason, therefore God hath added the bond of conscience by his special law, that he should make this return of sincere strong affection to his wife, that so their converse may be more sweet, lives comfortable, burdens easy so long as they live together. So that from the whole may be gathered that this duty was instituted for the exercise of the highest and most sincere affection that possibly can be, and between two mortal creatures that have two distinct souls, but one common interest between them.

3. Reason will tell us how much the husband is bound to love her that hath in a manner forsaken all the world, father, and mother, and all her relations, to cleave to her husband, and to share with him in all conditions until death, although she were free before the contract. Surely common gratitude will suggest that a recompense of true affection is due to her for this ; otherwise men are unthankful, unholy, and without natural affection, which is the worst character can be given to them.

4. The interest and comfort of the married estate will also persuade it. While love is kept up, all things go on sweetly ; but as soon as love faileth, presently everything is out of order and out of joint ; for when once they begin to disaffect the persons of each other, all matrimonial duties are stabbed at the heart. Therefore they should take heed they do not slight, or loath, and wax weary of each other ; for let anything of this prevail, and they will soon fail in other duties. Thence come hatreds, strifes, endless brawling, divorces, and other inconveniences, that make their lives burdensome, and their families miserable.

*Use 1.* To reprove that which is contrary to this love, bitterness and harshness of carriage : Col. iii. 19, 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter to them.' The gall was taken out of the sacrifices offered to Juno, as Plutarch witnesseth. This is seen—

1. Partly in a froward disposition, when men are offended for light causes or small provocations, and, like fine glasses, broken as soon as touched. Husbands are to love their wives, and therefore not to be bitter to them because there may fall out some lesser fault ; for 'love will cover a multitude of faults,' 1 Peter iv. 8. The wife is to obey her husband notwithstanding his manifold imperfections ; the duty of subjection ceaseth not for all that. So the husband is to love his wife : both are full of infirmities. Christ loved the church notwithstanding her many faults.

2. In sharp words and contumelious language, which leaveth such a grudge and such averseness in the mind as is not easily forgiven. The psalmist compareth bitter words to drawn swords, Ps. lv. 21. Certainly such bitter speeches must needs destroy all love and breed an unquiet life.

3. Churlish deeds also show this bitterness.

[1.] When the husband taketh from her all command in the family,



handling her rather like a slave than a consort and companion. She, under her husband, is to look to the ways of her household, Prov. xxxi. 27, and hath a power over the children and servants together with him.

[2.] Denying necessities is another part of this bitter carriage, or such things as belong to the decency of her estate; for she is to share with him in all good things, and her life is to be made comfortable to her; or else how can she know that he loveth her when he dealeth hardly and sparingly with her? He is bound to give her honour, 1 Peter iii. 7.

3. The height of this bitterness is, when passion and anger proceedeth to blows. The husband and wife, by the conjugal covenant, entered into the highest friendship, wherein disorders are not to be corrected by blows, but counsels; and blows are the fruits of furious wrath, rather than a rational dislike of the offence; fit for slaves, not the wife of the bosom.

*Use 2.* To persuade to this love. Directions—

1. Choose one that is amiable, evils are best prevented by a prudent choice, and errors in the first concoction are hardly mended in the second. Now the motive of our choice should not be only riches and beauty, for these are fading things, and what is fading cannot be the ground of a lasting love: Prov. xxxi. 30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised.' Beauty is but skin-deep, but godliness is rooted and increased by continuance.

2. Marry not till you be sure you can love entirely, for otherwise you enter into a covenant with a mind disposed to break it. As in Religion: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' so by proportion in marriage, all your days you lie open to temptations.

3. Love will in time beget love, as fire kindleth fire: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.'

4. Love not as bare husbands, but as christians; partly because this is to love as Christ. The love of Christ doth not only enforce the duty as an argument, but direct the manner as a pattern. Christ's love is holy as well as sincere and great. Partly because this will be most effectual to continue peace, both because of God's blessing; and partly because to the civil bond there is added the conscience of our duty to God; and besides, holy spiritual love is most exemplary.

5. All offences must be studiously avoided, for these strike at the fundamental duty, or cool your love; and when that is gone, you are chained to endless calamities. And then you must labour for a humble, meek, and quiet spirit; for when you open the floodgates to pride and passion, which let in the waters of strife, that will overwhelm all: Prov. xvii. 14, 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.'

6. When God sends infirmities, then is a time to show love and patience; love to the diseased party, patience and submission to God, who hath laid this burden upon you; and in both your self-denial and sincerity for this your trial; and it will not want its reward. It is odious to be weary of our relations because God hath laid his hand upon them. True love is to be seen at all times, but especially in

adversity: Prov. xvii. 17, 'A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.' Make conscience of your duty, and God will give you strength.

*Secondly*, Now I come to Christ's love; in which we have—(1.) The person that loveth, viz., Christ. (2.) The persons loved, 'The church.' (3.) The fruit of his love, 'He gave himself for it,' to a painful and ignominious death. There are solemn notions by which Christ's death is set forth—a ransom and a sacrifice.

1. A ransom: Mat. xx. 28, 'And gave his life a ransom for many,' *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, ἀντίλυτρον*: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' This relateth to our misery, or captivity and bondage under sin and death, and belongeth to Christ under the notion of a surety.

2. As a sacrifice, a mediatorial sacrifice: Isa. liii. 10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;' Eph. v. 2, 'As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' This relateth to the appeasing and propitiating of God, and is done by Christ under the notion of a priest. Now this giving himself for us is sometimes spoken of as an act of obedience, sometimes as an act of love.

[1.] Of obedience, with respect to his Father's command: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' and Phil. iii. 8, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.'

[2.] It is an act of love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved us, and gave himself for us;' Rom. v. 1, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.' And so it is spoken of here.

*Doct.* That the Lord Jesus did freely and willingly, out of his great love, give himself to die for his people.

Great love it was, if we consider—

1. The giver, Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever, to whom nothing can accrue from us: Isa. liii. 11, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' When he foresaw what it would cost, and what he should give, he said, 'It is enough.'

2. The gift; he gave himself: 1 Peter i. 18, 'We are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.'

3. 'For us,' whom he after calleth into a church: Rom. v. 6–8, 'For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But herein God commended his love to us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.' Oh, let us be blessing God for this love, and show our thankfulness both in word and deed.

[1.] In word: Rev. v. 9, 'And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation.' The angels, who are the spectators, ever blessed God for it; and shall not we, who be the parties interested?

[2.] In deed, by giving up ourselves to him: Rom. xii. 1, 'I



beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service; and Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and loved not their lives to the death.' Let us not grudge at the loss of any of our interests, so we may promote his glory.

### SERMON XXXI.

*That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word.*—EPH. v. 26.

IN the words we have—(1.) The end of Christ's sacrifice; (2.) The means and instruments by which he doth accomplish his end, which are two, word and sacraments.

1. The end is expressed by two words, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it.' To sanctify implieth dedication to God; to be cleansed, to be purified from sin. A thing is then said to be sanctified when it is separated from a common to a holy use: Heb. xiii. 12, 'Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.' And it is purified and cleansed when it is washed from filthiness. Now that filthiness that maketh us odious to God is either the guilt or the stain of sin; and so this cleansing noteth both the renovation of our natures and the justification of our persons: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' We are renewed by his Spirit, and we have remission of sins through his blood. So Titus iii. 5-7, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

2. The means, 'By the washing of water through the word;' wherein the apostle sheweth how the virtue of Christ's death is applied to us, by the ordinary means of grace. He instanceth in two ordinances—baptism and the word. By the washing of water is meant baptism: Titus iii. 5, 'By the washing of regeneration;' John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' By the word is not meant *verbum consecratorium*, but *concionalis*; not the words of institution, or the sermon that may accompany baptism, but the whole doctrine of the new covenant revealed in the gospel, which

is a powerful means to promote sanctification. The word hath the relation of a charter, and baptism of a seal or sign of the grace offered and exhibited.

Now from these words I might observe—

First, The causes and means from which, and by which, the salvation of a sinner is brought about.

1. At the bottom of all there is the love of God and of Christ, which is the first mover of all that which is done for our recovery. Christ loved the church; now this love should ever be admired and adored by us.

2. The procuring cause is the merit and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us as a ransom and propitiatory sacrifice, which is the next ground of our comfort and confidence: 1 John i. 7, 'And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

3. After salvation is impetrated, it must be applied by fit means, internal and external. Internal, which on God's part is the Holy Spirit sanctifying and cleansing us from sin, and by his powerful operation working in us those things which are necessary to the application of the love of God and the participation of the satisfaction and merits of Christ: Titus iii. 5, 'But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' On our part faith: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' We, believing the word of God revealing salvation by Christ, are cleansed from sin.

4. Besides these internal means, there need external also, by which the Spirit is conveyed, and our hearts are wrought upon in a congruous way, which are the word and sacraments, that are the instruments by which the Holy Ghost doth work and confirm faith in us. All which sheweth the necessary use of ordinances. Christ did not only purchase grace, but grace to be given out this way; by 'the washing of water through the word.'

Secondly, These causes and means of salvation must not be separated one from another, nor confounded one with another.

1. Not separated one from another. We cannot rest upon the grace of God without the satisfaction of Christ; for how then shall we salve the honour of his justice? Still this thought will occur, that God is a just God, and breed in us the fears of death: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things, are worthy of death.' Nor can we take comfort in the satisfaction of Christ without true conversion to him; that is, without the true mortification of sin, and the life of holiness wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost: Mat. xviii. 3, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Neither can we expect the operation of the Holy Ghost without the use of the word working faith in us: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;' John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' And the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. Nor must the word be used with the neglect of sacraments, for that is to despise one of God's helps. And besides, there is somewhat in sacraments beyond the word for our use and benefit. They agree in this, that both concern faith; that neither of



them work but as accompanied with the divine grace. But they differ in that the word belongeth to all: 'Go preach the gospel to every creature.' But the sacraments are confined within the limits of the church, and belong to those who have submitted to the Lord's covenant. The word begets faith, the sacraments increase it. If they beget it, it is by accident, not by appointment, and by the help of the word which doth accompany them. The word shineth by its own light, neither doth it need the sacraments that it may be understood. Sacraments cannot be understood without the word, for they are not natural, but instituted signs; not natural, as smoke is of fire, but instituted, as a badge and cognisance is of such a dignity, order, and profession. In short, the sacraments are a greater help to grace or communion with Christ than the bare word, and have their special use to show us how wonderfully condescending and exact God is to make all sure to us, and to excite and bind every one in particular to put in for a share in the grace offered to us, and also withal to perform the duties required of us, and solemnly to invest us into a right, and put us in possession of the blessedness promised to us; therefore these must not be neglected or despised.

Once more, one sacrament must not be separated from another, as to content ourselves with baptism without a religious and frequent use of the Lord's supper, as many do; for though the washing of water be only mentioned, yet the other sacrament is also here implied. The one sealeth our making covenant with God, the other bindeth us to keep covenant with him, which a serious christian will see a need of, and not only find life, but growth and perseverance; therefore all these things must not be separated.

2. These things must not be confounded one with another. We must not ascribe that to the word and sacraments which belongeth to the Spirit, nor that to the Spirit which belongeth to Christ, nor that to Christ which only belongeth to the eternal love of God, nor that to good works which belongeth to faith, nor that to the sacraments which belongeth to the word, nor that to baptism which belongeth to the Lord's supper; but all things must keep their proper place. Therefore we must distinctly consider—

[1.] What is proper to the grace of God. The first moving cause or inducement to incline God to show us favour, or bring about our salvation, was merely the love of God: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

[2.] What is proper to the merits of Christ. That righteousness by virtue of which the wrath of God is appeased, our sins are expiated, blessings of the new covenant purchased, and we are reconciled to God, is the only sacrifice and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was the love of God manifested towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' This honour must be reserved to Christ, to be a sacrifice for sin, a propitiation for us, and a perfect saviour and intercessor to obtain the Spirit to fit us for our present duties and future happiness.

[3.] What is proper to the Spirit of Christ, namely, to sanctify and cleanse us or convert us unto God : John iii. 5, 'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

[4.] What is proper to the operation or effect of the Spirit in us, which is faith and new obedience. Faith giveth us our first right to the privileges of the new covenant, and new obedience continueth it ; for the one is our entrance into the evangelical estate, the other our abiding therein.

[5.] What is proper to the word and proper to the sacraments. To the word, to convert ; to the sacraments, to confirm ; for the sacraments are of no use till the word hath some effect upon us : Acts ii. 41, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized ; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.'

[6.] What is proper to baptism and proper to the holy supper. To baptism, to accept the covenant, wherein we, professing ourselves to forsake the devil, the world, and the flesh, do choose Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for our God. And the Lord entering into covenant with us, to give us, first, grace to live in his obedience, and to pardon our sins and bring us to glory. So that we are both obliged and enabled hereby. This is once done in baptism, but often renewed in the Lord's supper : 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us ; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ;' Mat. iii. 11, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' Well, then, if these things be confounded, we shall fall into dangerous errors, and hinder both our sanctification and comfort. The sum is this : the first cause of all is God's mercy, that floweth forth freely by the merit of Christ. The merit of Christ procureth the Spirit for us, who sanctifieth and converteth us unto God, which grace is offered in the word, sealed in the sacraments, which bind us more closely to God and excite us with greater confidence to wait for the grace offered by him, to bring us to salvation and eternal glory.

Neither is this useful only to set us right in doctrinals, but also to guide us in matter of practice, how to obtain grace necessary for us. If we lack anything, we must ask it of God ; for his love and grace is the fountain-cause of all these things, and his grant is necessary to accomplish our desires : Rev. xix. 8, 'And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints ;' Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man.' All cometh originally from his grant. Now when we come to the Father for this, sin hath made us so odious to God that he would not look graciously and favourably toward us, but for Christ's sake ; therefore he sendeth us to his Son, whose blood cleanseth us from all our sins, and in whom alone God is propitious to us. If we turn ourselves to Christ, he intercedeth for us at the right hand of God, but referreth us to the Spirit, whose proper



work sanctification is. If we wait for the Spirit's efficacy, he sendeth us to Moses and the prophets and apostles. In the word and ordinances we shall hear of him; therefore when we pray, hear, read, meditate, receive the Lord's supper, let us behave ourselves suitably to the nature of each ordinance; these are means to convey and confirm grace. And they are the more effectual because they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and receive their virtue from the love of God, the merit of Christ, and the almighty operation of the Spirit. But I waive the further prosecution of this, and observe—

*Doct.* That Christ's end in dying for his people was to sanctify and cleanse them, and make them a holy and peculiar people unto God.

It is asserted in the text, and confirmed, Titus ii. 14, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Christ died, not only to redeem us from wrath and from the flames of hell, but to redeem us from sin; not only to abolish guilt and our obligation to punishment, but to establish holiness.

1. This is necessary with respect to our necessity, that the salvation introduced by him might answer his people's necessities. The plaster need be as broad as the sore, and our gain by Christ must correspond with our loss by Adam, and our remedy be suited to our misery. Now our misery lay in our sinfulness as well as our liableness to wrath. By Adam we lost the image of God, favour and fellowship with him; and therefore our restitution must be suited. First his image restored, then his favour, then his fellowship. This misery is felt and apprehended by a troubled conscience, therefore they come to God: 'Purify me, take away iniquity, and receive us graciously,' Hosea xiv. 2; and not only, with Pharaoh, 'Take away this plague. To be sanctified easeth the serious of their great trouble. The misery is a motive, but sin is the cause that maketh them look after a remedy. A man that hath broken his leg, his pain maketh him look after the chirurgeon; but the main work which he hath to do is to set it in joint again, that he may go right.

2. With respect to God's interest. Surely Christ aimed at the service of his redeemed ones, to make them perfect in every good work. Sin had made them unserviceable to God. Now Christ died to put us into a capacity of serving him again, by sanctifying and cleansing us from sin, which disabled us for our work: 'He hath redeemed us to God,' Rev. v. 9, that he might fit us for the Lord's use: Ps. iv. 3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;' Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'

3. Christ would separate his people from the rest of the world, and therefore would regenerate and sanctify them. A distinct community must have a distinct excellency. Other societies excel the church for strength, policy, worldly pomp; but this is the proper excellency of the church: Ps. xciii. 5, 'Holiness becometh thy house for ever.' This becometh them, both for the special relation they have to God, and their expectations from him. Their relation to God inferreth their likeness; for God himself is 'glorious in holiness,' Exod. xv. 11.

And their expectations from him ; this they expect as their final glory, and therefore it must be begun here : ver. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' The preparations and beginnings answer to our final happiness.

4. Without holiness there can be no communion with God ; for all communion supposes agreement : Amos iii. 3, 'How can two walk together except they are agreed ?' How can God be present, and familiarly conversant with us, or we be so with him, if we walk in ways displeasing to each other ? God doth all things in exact holiness, which we like not ; and we live in sin, which is provoking to God. But we may expect his presence and favour when we are agreed, willing and nilling, loving and hating the same things : 1 John i. 7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another.' God is a pure and holy being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness. The more like him we are, the nearer we are to him, and the more capable of enjoying him ; for, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart, Ps. lxxiii. 1 ; and Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure.' Therefore Christ, whose aim it was to bring us into the nearest communion with God, would sanctify and cleanse his people, and make them capable of familiarity and friendship with him.

5. Christ's design in his death was to express his love to us in the highest way of manifestation, or to go to the uttermost, not only in the manner, but in the effects. (1.) He hath expressed his love to us in the manner of our deliverance in the most wonderful and astonishing way that possibly can be imagined : Rom. v. 8, 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ;' 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love ; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' (2.) Not only in the manner, but in the fruits and effects of his death ; not in temporal mercies, but spiritual and eternal, in saving us from hell rather than worldly misery and calamity. Among benefits this is the order : Natural perfections are better than adventitious. He that restoreth my health doth me a greater good than he that bestoweth upon me a fine garment. Moral perfections are better than natural. Life is more than riches, and wisdom is better than strength ; it is better to be wise than to be strong ; and saving grace is more than moral wisdom. And among spiritual and saving benefits holiness is chief ; as compare the two saving benefits, justification and sanctification. Justification, or pardon, freeth us *a malo naturali*, from a natural evil, which is punishment or painful evil ; but sanctification *a malo morali*, from a moral evil, which is sin or a sinful evil. The one freeth from the wrath of God, the other qualifyeth us, and maketh us capable of the love of God. They are both excellent privileges, but judge you which is the greatest. Surely moral evils are greater than natural ; sin is worse than hell. To offend God, or be displeasing to God, is the worst state the creature can fall into. Certainly that which is the object of God's complacency is the greatest benefit. God loveth us as sanctified rather than as pardoned. He pitieth our misery, and pardoneth our sins for Christ's sake, but delighteth in us as having his



own image impressed upon us. We love God much because he pardoneth much ; but God delighteth in the pure and upright : Prov. xi. 20, 'They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord ; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.' Or shall I use this argument ? That which hath the nearest affinity to our eternal blessedness is the greater benefit. Now if you will go by that rule, the case will be soon decided. If you consider what our eternal blessedness is, not only an estate of perfect felicity or exemption from misery, but an estate of exact holiness and purity, to see God as he is, and to be like him : 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' An immaculate and sinless estate. Now let us see which of the benefits hath the nearest affinity with it. Justification is *causa removens prohibens*, a cause that removeth the impediment, or that which forbiddeth our entrance into heaven ; and sanctification is the beginning and introduction into this blessed estate, and doth dispositively fit us for it. Therefore judge you which hath the nearest affinity, that which removeth the impediment, or that which giveth us the beginning, foretaste, and first-fruits of this happy life. Put it in a temporal interest : If a man be banished the court or his country by sentence of law, when is he nearer to the king ? when the legal exclusion is taken off, or he is actually sent for and brought into the palace, and ready to be received by him ? This instance is not full home, because we are not only brought to God, but there is a change of nature and we are made amiable in his eyes. Well, then, to draw up the argument a little closer, many would think God had expressed great love if Christ had procured for us worldly comforts or temporal benefits ; others, if he had only procured our pardon, and taken away the legal exclusion which shut us out from God ; but he hath done more, he hath procured grace to change our natures, and to sanctify and cleanse us, that God may delight in us. This is a gift answerable to Christ's love and merit.

*Use 1.* Is information. It informeth us of divers important truths.

1. That in ourselves we are polluted and unclean, or else why need there so much ado to get us sanctified and cleansed ? Why must the Son of God give himself for us to sanctify and cleanse us, but that we are polluted ? This is a truth frequently represented in scripture ; as Job xv. 14, 'What is man that he should be clean ? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?' that is, man by nature is neither clean nor righteous, but destitute of purity in his nature, and also of uprightness in his conversation. They are ill acquainted with man who think otherwise of him. If we consider the universality in sinning, the earliness in sinning, the easiness in sinning, the constancy in sinning, that is visible and evident in all mankind, you may soon see what his nature is. And the fountain being so corrupt, the streams are defiled also. Surely we are so in God's eyes : Ps. xiv. 3, 'The Lord looked down from heaven,' and what did he see here below ? 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.' All persons, and all their actions flowing from their corrupt hearts, are become filthy and odious to God, and they are utterly

incapable of enjoying communion with him ; and so they remain till they be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Solomon telleth us, Prov. xiii. 5, that 'a wicked man is loathsome.' To whom ? To God especially, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab. i. 13 ; that is, with countenance and approbation. To good men : Prov. xxix. 27, 'An unjust man is an abomination to the just.' To standers-by, of what sort soever they be ; for they that allow sin in themselves dislike it in others : Titus iii. 3, 'Hateful and hating one another.' To themselves, for they are unwilling to look into themselves : John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light ; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' And are shy of God : 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God ?' Therefore we all need to be sanctified and cleansed if we would have any benefit by Christ.

2. That nothing can cleanse us but the blood of Christ. Can man cleanse himself ? What sound part is there left in us to mend the rest ? Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one.' That which is corrupt cannot cleanse itself. Can the word do it without Christ ? Good instructions may show a man his duty, but cannot change the bent of his heart. Christ needed not only be sent as a prophet, but must as a priest offer himself for a mediatorial sacrifice before this benefit could be procured for us : Eph. v. 2, 'He hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.' There was no possible way to recover holiness into the world again unless a price be paid ; and no lesser price than the blood of the Son of God must be paid to provoked justice. Christ must give himself before we can be sanctified and cleansed.

3. That they do not aright improve the death of Christ that seek comfort by it and not holiness. He died not only for our justification, but sanctification also. There are two main reasons why the death of Christ hath so little effect upon us—either he is a forgotten Christ or a mistaken Christ.

[1.] Men do not consider the ends for which he came : 1 John iii. 5, 'He was manifested to take away our sins.' He came to give his Spirit to miserable sinful man to sanctify and cleanse him, and fit him for the service and enjoyment of God. Now things that we mind not do not work upon us. The work of redemption Christ hath performed without our minding or asking. He took our nature, fulfilled the law, satisfied the Lawgiver, and merited grace for us, without our asking or thinking. But in applying this grace, he requireth our serious consideration : Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' And our faith : John xi. 26, 'Believest thou that I am able to do this for thee ?' Our asking : John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living water.' Acceptance of him to these ends : John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, &c.

[2.] But the other is a greater evil, a mistaken Christ ; when we make use of him only to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning, as if God were more reconcilable to sin than he was before, because of Christ's dying for sinners. Now this is a great fault ; for—



(1.) Thereby you make Christ a minister, an encourager of sin; which is a blasphemy to be abhorred by all christians: Gal. ii. 17, 'But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.'

(2.) You set up Christ against Christ, an imaginary Christ, or an idol of your own making, against the true Christ, who came by water and blood. Not by blood only: 1 John v. 6, 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood;' and 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye are healed,' 1 Peter ii. 24. You set his death against the ends of his death, and run from and rebel against God, because he came to redeem you, and recover you to God.

(3.) You separate between his benefits, and only cull out that part which suiteth most with your self-love. You have natures to be healed, as well as your peace to be made: Isa. liii. 5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' They that seek holiness from the Redeemer have a more spiritual affection to him. The guilt of sin is against our interest, but its power against that subjection and duty we owe to God. Christ's work is not only to ease our conscience, but free our hearts from slavery, that we may serve God with more liberty and delight.

(4.) If you do not mind holiness, you defeat your Redeemer of his end, and seek to put him to shame: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' To cherish what he came to destroy is vile ingratitude.

(5.) If you slight holiness, it argueth lessening thoughts of Christ's merit. Christ thought it of such value as to offer himself a mediatorial sacrifice to procure it. Our respect to Christ's blood is judged by the respect we have to the benefits purchased thereby. The two great benefits are the favour of God and the image of God. He that preferreth corruptible things before the favour of God hath no esteem of Christ's merit; and he that doth not esteem the image of God, which standeth in righteousness and true holiness, doth not esteem the blood of Christ: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.'

4. We need not despair of holiness, Christ having paid so great a price for it, but may with the more confidence use the means of grace because they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Christ hath purchased such a treasure of grace as cannot be exhausted, and it is dispensed to us by the word and sacraments. The apostle doth not say barely, 'He gave himself to sanctify and cleanse,' resting there; but he addeth, 'by the washing of water through the word.' So John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.' Christ hath established the merit, but the actual influence is by the Spirit, which we receive in the ordinances as the ordinary way.

5. It shows the preciousness of holiness; it is a thing dearly bought,

and the great blessing which Christ intended to us ; therefore it should be more prized and sought after by us. When Christ was devising what he should do for his church to make it honourable and glorious, he took this course to make it holy.

[1.] This is that which maketh us amiable in God's sight : Ps. xi. 7, 'The righteous God loveth righteousness ; his countenance doth behold the upright.'

[2.] It is indispensably required by God : 1 Thes. iv. 3, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'

[3.] It is a great part of our salvation by Christ : Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'

[4.] It is a means to the rest, especially eternal life : Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me ;' Heb. xii. 14, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'

6. It shows who are partakers of the benefits and fruits of Christ's death. His kindred by incarnation is reckoned to them ; he is doubly akin to them, *respectu incarnationis suæ et regenerationis nostræ*, both as he is born of a woman and as they are born of God : Heb. ii. 11, 'He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' His sacrifice is reckoned to them : Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Our Lord regenerates, justifies, sanctifies all who shall have benefit by his death. But who are they ? There are two words used, 'sanctify' and 'cleans.' To be sanctified argues a dedication to God ; so there is a difference between you and others. To be cleansed implies a change of the state of your hearts ; so there is a difference between you and yourselves. They are a people set apart to live and act for God : Ps. iv. 3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' They are not what they were before : 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, sanctified,' &c. And this change should be more sensible and visible every day.

## SERMON XXXII.

*That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.*—EPH. v. 27.

In this verse we have the last end of our redemption by Christ, the perfection and consummation of our sanctification in the life to come. In setting forth of which take notice—

1. Of our nearness to Christ, 'That he might present it to himself ;' that is, assume or take us home to live with him, and abide always in his presence.

2. The effect of this union and nearness, which is—



[1.] Generally expressed, 'A glorious church.' It is an allusion to the spouse of a king, or a royal marriage: Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.' Her glory is now more internal than external and conspicuous, and also shall be eternal and without end.

[2.] Particularly explained, or wherein the glory of the church doth consist.

(1.) Negatively, 'Not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' A spot is in the garments, a wrinkle is in the flesh; and then follow the general words, 'Or any such thing.' Neither with filthy garments, nor with shrivelled flesh, nor blind, nor lame. Metaphors are tender things, and must not be strained. Some say no spot of sin, or wrinkle of misery, when the flesh is dried up with age or sorrow. It is safer to say in general, No defect or deformity shall remain; no remnant or stain of Adam's sin left, whether it be sin or misery: Cant. iv. 7, 'Thou art fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.'

(2.) Positively, 'But that it should be holy, and without blemish,' perfectly pure, and exempt from either blemish or blame, for the word signifieth both; and the allusion is to a spouse that excelleth in beauty and comeliness.

*Doct.* That the final end of our redemption is that we may be presented at the last day glorious in purity and holiness.

I shall present this note or point of doctrine, as it lieth in the text, by going over the several branches of it, which will fully make it out. Give me leave to take notice of these things—

First, Of the final end of our redemption; and there—

1. Of his love, that Christ could not satisfy himself with doing us good here, but he would provide for our glorious estate hereafter. In the former verse he had spoken of what Christ would do for us in this life, whilst the ordinances of the word and baptism were in force, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water through the word.' Now this did not content him, but he had a further end, and that is in the text, that he might bring us into a nearer familiarity and presence with himself, that we might not only be employed by God in some remote service, or at a distance from him, but minister before his throne. Here is a state consistent both with sin and misery; the church is not without her spots and infirmities, and also her wrinkles and troubles; but in the state of the life to come there is no such thing. Here we enjoy God upon earth, but there in heaven, a better paradise than that we lost by Adam. We have our blessedness in the heavenly places: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;' where we converse with God, not as Adam in paradise among the beasts, but among the angels.

2. That our glory in heaven is the fruit of Christ's death, who procured this eternal inheritance for us. It is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ. Take away his death, there can be no expiation of sin, therefore no inheritance, no covenant or promise of the inheritance; for it is said, Heb. ix. 15, 'That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called may receive the promise of eternal

inheritance.' All the promises of eternal life are made for and in consideration of Christ's satisfying the justice of God, and meriting his favour for us; without that we can neither have right to nor possession of this blessed estate. It is good to consider what respect the death of Christ hath to our estate of glory, and what respect likewise holiness hath to it. The death of Christ hath a meritorious influence upon it, as it purchaseth the gift, and the promise, and the Spirit to enable a man to fulfil the conditions of the promise. But holiness doth qualify for this blessedness, partly as it is the condition without which we cannot obtain it: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' and partly as it denoteth the persons who by the gospel grant have alone a title thereunto: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' and partly as it disposeth and fitteth us for this blessedness, for they are formed for this very thing: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit;' and are made meet for it: Col. i. 12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

3. It implieth that none but those who are purified by the blood and Spirit of Christ have interest in this privilege. All these have an interest, and none but these, for we must not disturb the order of Christ's benefits; for, first, he doth sanctify and cleanse the church by the washing of water through the word, from the guilt and filth of sin, and then present it to himself as a glorious church. They must be regenerated by the Spirit, and have their consciences purged from dead works by his blood, before they are capable. We must be children before we can be heirs; none are children but they that are born of the Spirit, and so justified and adopted into God's family; none can have the whole sum, but they that have the earnest and first-fruits, for that is God's method: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;' Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' We cannot expect the flower or fruit without the seed, nor the end without the beginning. Now holiness doth partícipate of glory, and heaven is virtually in the seed of grace.

Secondly, That we enter into this everlasting estate by being presented to Christ; for in the text it is said, 'That he may present it to himself,' that is, as the bride to the bridegroom, that the marriage may be consummated. It was the ancient custom that betrothing preceded marriage; as Deut. xx. 7, 'What man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man takes her.' Thus Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together, Mat. i. 18. So we are contracted to Christ now, but married hereafter; as Rev. xix. 7, 'Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.'

In the scripture there is a threefold presentation spoken of—

1. One made by believers themselves: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you



therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service ;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' When we give up ourselves to God by Christ, and employ our time, and strength, and all our faculties for him.

2. It is ascribed to the apostles, or Christ's messengers, who have a charge ; and when they have done their work, present us to God as the fruit of their labour : 2 Cor. xi. 2, 'But I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' It is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to prepare and fit Christ's people, that they may be a spouse to him ; and it is a blessed thing when we can produce them as the fruit and pledge of our faithfulness ; for in the great day of our accounts this will be our crown and our rejoicing, that we have converted any to God, or prepared and fitted them to be accepted by Christ.

3. This presentation is applied to Christ himself. Now two ways is Christ said to present us—(1.) To himself ; (2.) To God.

[1.] To himself ; that is spoken of in the text, which is nothing else but his assuming and taking us home to himself, according to the marriage covenant and contract. As when Esther was chosen to be wife to the great king Ahasuerus, she was first to be prepared, and to accomplish the months of her purification, Esther ii. ; so first Christ sanctifieth and cleanseth us by the word and ordinances, and then he presenteth us to himself, as a bride made ready for the solemn day of espousals.

[2.] To God ; so it is said, Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight ;' that is, of God the Father ; for the antecedent you find, ver. 19, 'It pleased the Father.' Now Christ's presenting us to God may be looked upon—

(1.) As an account of his charge, as having done the work for which he was sent into the world. Christ as mediator hath an office and trust committed to him, of which he must give an account ; for so he is God's, 1 Cor. iii. 23, and 1 Cor. xi. 3, 'The head of Christ is God,' and he must give an account to him. Now this account he giveth when he doth present himself and all his flock to God, saying, Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' Blessed are they that shall appear in that company and congregation, when they shall be presented to God as a prey snatched out of the teeth of the lion.'

(2.) As an act of rejoicing in his own success ; as a minister taketh delight in those whom by grace he hath gained to God : 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ?' 1 Thes. ii. 19. So our Lord himself rejoiceth to see the proof and virtue of his death, and that his blood was not shed in vain. This is recompense enough for all his sufferings : Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' The words may be understood of foresight when it was designed, or of sight when it was accomplished. And some good inter-

preters understand, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,' Heb. xii. 2; that he had in his eye as a reward of his sufferings his numerous seed, or the church of the saints, whom he should purify and set apart for God.

(3.) As an act of his love and recompense to the faithful, who have owned him in the world. Christ will own them before God, men, and angels, be they never so mean and despicable here upon earth: Luke xii. 8, 'Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall also the Son of man confess before the angels of God;' Rev. iii. 5, 'But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Christ will solemnly and honourably own them as his, and given to him in the great day, when all the holy angels shall be present. Therefore we should often think of this solemn presentation, that we may not be ashamed of Christ in the world.

Thirdly, I observe in the text, that those who are presented to Christ, and by Christ to God, is his church, and is a glorious church: 'That he might present it to himself,' *ἑνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*. This is often spoken of in scripture. I shall produce but two places; the first is Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.' The life of a christian now is a glorious life, but it is a hidden life. The spiritual life is hidden under the natural: Gal. i. 22, 'And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ.' And hidden under the veil of infirmities and weaknesses: 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities.' And the obscurity and meanness of their condition: Heb. xi. 36-38, 'And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' Reproaches: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you;' 2 Cor. vi. 8, 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true.' They are counted a company of dissemblers, and yet they are the faithful servants of the most high God. But the glory of our life is manifested when Christ is manifested and doth appear. God's children are owned before the world: Rom. viii. 19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' And there is no weakness or infelicity to obscure our life; because of our relation to the Lord of glory, we are made glorious. The other place is 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.' Mark, first, the apostle doth not say, the saints shall be glorified, but Christ shall be glorified in them, that is, objectively, because of the glory he puts upon them. Again, he doth not say, Christ shall be glorified in himself; though that is true, for his glory shall be revealed also: 1 Peter iv. 13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy;' but Christ shall be 'glorified in the saints;' there shall a glory result to Christ from the glory he bestoweth on



them. Christ is glorified in the saints two ways—actively, as he is lauded and praised by them, and objectively, or by the impression of glory upon them; though the saints should be silent, the work would speak for itself. But the other expression is, that Christ will be ‘admired in those that believe.’ We admire at things that exceed knowledge and expectation, or such things as were never seen before, nor could the heart of man conceive how these things should ever be brought to pass. Now this glory will exceed all our hope and expectation. But who shall thus admire? The good angels, that wonder now at the grace of the Redeemer: 1 Peter i. 12, ‘Which things the angels desire to look into.’ They shall wonder then at the final effect, the glory he puts upon his people; they stand by and admire what Christ meaneth to do with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see them so much loved and honoured whose lives they counted madness and folly; they counted them the off-scouring of all things, and Christ maketh them to shine as the stars in the firmament. Lastly, the saints themselves are filled with wonder, finding their expectation so far exceeded.

But more distinctly, there is a threefold glory put upon the saints—(1.) Relative and adherent; (2.) Intrinsic and inherent; (3.) Circumstantial.

1. The relative glory of the saints standeth in three things—

[1.] In the free and full forgiveness of all our sins; and our absolution is pronounced by the judge’s own mouth sitting on the throne: Acts iii. 19, ‘Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.’ Here we have a right to pardon by the grant of the new covenant; and it is in part executed, and put into act by the gift of the Spirit; but then the judge, *pro tribunali*, doth solemnly declare and determine our right, and absolve and accept us unto life in the sight of all the world; then is the sentence pronounced, and also executed and put in force; and ever after do all the effects and fruits of sin cease.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. At the last day the saints are not only judged, but judges: 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, ‘Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?’ *Per modum suffragii*, as assessors with Christ on the bench, or assessors in judicature, however they are here reviled, slighted, and persecuted.

[3.] They shall be publicly owned before God and his angels by head and poll, when Christ shall present them to God, and lead them as the shepherd of the sheep into their everlasting fold, as having acquitted themselves to God, conquered temptations, and kept his charge, that Christ may own them without any impeachment of honour to himself: 1 Thes. iii. 13, ‘To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.’ The pure and holy are then acceptable to him, and shall be presented by him to God, as a full proof of the virtue of his death.

2. The glory inherent and internal: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Now it is revealed to us, then in us, fully accomplished in our persons, souls, and bodies.

[1.] In our souls. This glorious estate lieth in the sight and fruition of God. The object is glorious: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.' The manner of sight or knowing is glorious: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' More intimately and more immediately: we shall have the knowledge of the mysteries of salvation, which now we are ignorant of, and know God as truly as God knoweth us.

[2.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the bodies of the saints: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' A glimpse was given to us in Christ's transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 2, 'And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' So when he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully glorious; he could not endure the light which shined to him from heaven round about, Acts ix. 3. When the saints shall appear with him in glory, 'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father,' Mat. xiii. 43.

3. The circumstantial glory; there—

[1.] The place is glorious, the heavenly paradise: 2 Cor. xii. 4, 'He was caught into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.'

[2.] The company is glorious. All the glorified saints and angels: Heb. xii. 22, 23, 'But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

[3.] Their daily work and exercise is glorious, even to give glory to God for ever and ever: Rev. vii. 9, 10, 'After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

Fourthly, I observe that the principal glory of the church lieth in its purity and holiness: Jude 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.' It must needs be so; for—

1. This is God's glory: Exod. xv. 11, 'Glorious in holiness.' There is nothing in God which is not God himself, and his unity forbids us to divide him; but yet the scripture teacheth us to distinguish his perfections, and comparing them one with another, give them the advantage, as conduceth more to his honour and our profit. Therefore thus we conceive of God, that moral perfections are to be preferred before



natural; it is better to be wise than to be strong. Now among moral perfections, how shall we range them? Justice, mercy, holiness: our interest leadeth us to prefer mercy before justice, being laden with sins and miseries; that his mercy rendereth him more amiable to us, because of our miseries and necessities. But now we may give holiness the pre-eminence, because this conduceth most to the glory of God and the perfection and benefit of human nature, and doth most preserve the awe of the majesty of God in our hearts; for holiness is a more awing thing than power. Power checketh and restraineth any violent attempts against sovereign majesty, but holiness daunteth the heart, and commandeth reverence, and representeth God as fit to be loved and feared. Now, then, to be like God is one of the highest perfections of the creature, and when the image of God is perfectly restored, they are in their most glorious estate.

2. Sin is the cause of all our misery; and therefore when we are completely holy, our misery which we incurred by the fall of Adam is then at an end. It was sin which was the cause of separation from God: Isa. lix. 2, 'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' So holiness is the means of union with him. Then when we are perfectly holy, by necessary consequence we are perfectly happy: Ps. xvii. 15, 'But as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Well, then, might the apostle define this glory by purity and holiness; nothing letteth and hindereth the happiness of the creature when sin is fully done away.

3. Then we are dispositively fitted for the full enjoyment of God. Our glory is begun by holiness, and is still increasing to a further glory: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' All privileges depend upon holiness, our pardon on regeneration or change of nature, and heaven on change of life; and therefore, when justification and sanctification are complete, our joy will be full.

Fifthly, This purity and holiness shall then be exactly complete. While we are in the world, neither is the whole church perfect, nor particular believers.

1. Not the whole church. The state of the church is quite different from what it will be hereafter; that needeth not much proof, if we consider the disordered state of Christendom, as it is in its present posture. Alas! how much is the glory of it now eclipsed by the lamentable imperfection of its members and corruption in worship, and rent and torn by divisions and sects, and scattered by persecutions of those that have power over it! God's children are pilgrims to another world, and can hardly get leave to pass through this world, though they would pay for their bread and water, as Israel offered to Edom. How many enemies come forth to stop them in the very wilderness! But most of the calamities in the church come from itself, its diseased members or foolish guides; and no wonder that the ship in the hands of ill pilots dasheth so often against the rocks. It is spotted and stained by the calumnies and reproaches of adversaries, but chiefly by the

scandal of its own children. To speak nothing of the openly corrupt, who have turned the doctrine of Christ into vain janglings, corrupted his worship by the pageantry of empty and ridiculous ceremonies, and have turned its discipline and government into a temporal domination, alas ! it hath nearer wounds at home, by sidings and emulations, whilst every party is impaling and enclosing the common salvation, uncharitably excommunicating all others ; and the ball of contention is tossed to and fro ; and that party that can rustle down others that stand in their way think Christ only favours them. Though with all this disadvantage, it is 'better to dwell in the courts of the Lord than in the tents of wickedness ;' yet how much is this short of that blessed state when all is glorious, pure, and holy, and the church is adorned as a bride fit for her husband, and that great council of souls, with perfect harmony, are lauding and praising God for evermore, and live sweetly together without any discord in this holy mount !

2. Nor particular believers : Phil. iii. 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' Paul's confession will fit all our mouths. While we are in the world, we need that something should be purged and washed from us ; but then there is 'no spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing.'

But if the soul be thus presented to Christ, when shall it be ? Either we must acknowledge perfection in this life, or some purgatory after death. I answer—

[1.] The thing is clear, but we may be ignorant of the time and manner, and reserve it to experience.

[2.] It is most likely and probable that the same term that puts a period to our lives doth also to our sins. As the soul in the first conjunction with the body began to be defiled and infected with sin, so that a man, when he first beginneth to be a man, is a sinner, so in the separation of the soul from the body, it is perfectly sanctified, and presented to Christ without spot and blemish. The veil of the flesh is then rent, and they are admitted into the immediate sight of God.

[3.] Those that have sense to the very last do then most eminently desire and expect the glory of God ; as Stephen : Acts vii. 59, 'And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

[4.] If we say the soul, when it is separated from the body, be sanctified in its passage, there is no great inconvenience, for sanctification is a part of glorification : Rom. viii. 30, 'For whom he justified, he sanctified ; and whom he sanctified, he glorified ;' and in a moment it may be perfected.

*Use 1.* To exhort you often to think of this estate. Oh, that our hearts were exercised more about these things ! Grace would not be so dead, and comfort so scanty ; it would enliven us and quicken us to duty ; and, in the apostle's phrase, 'make us abound in the work of the Lord ;' that all will be glorious at Christ's coming. More especially our whole life should be spent in thankfulness to God, who sent his Son to redeem us to this end : 1 Peter i. 3, 4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that



fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you ;' Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.'

2. Let us improve it.

[1.] To glorify God and Christ, who intend so much glory to us. We would all be glorified in heaven, but few think of glorifying God upon earth. Our Lord teacheth us another lesson : John xvii. 4, 5, 'I have glorified thee upon earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was.' God at first placed us at the lower end of the world, that we may glorify him there, before he translateth us to the upper end of the world to praise him for ever. Here is our work, there we receive our reward ; our work is on earth, where so few mind it, where there is so much opposition, so many difficulties and temptations to divert us, where it costs us shame, and pain, and trouble ; here we glorify him self-denyingly, there triumphantly.

[2.] Let the foresight of this estate comfort us against our abasement in the world. We are now obscure, afflicted, poor, disgraced in the world ; our names are cast forth as evil, or, as the prophet speaketh, 'Ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and become the infamy of the people,' Ezek. xxxvi. 3 ; but Christ will present us to God as glorious, without any spot or blemish. Therefore let us not avoid crosses, nor any abasement, scorn, and disgrace for Christ's sake ; everything that relateth to Christ hath an honour put upon it for its relation to him : Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.' Besides, the final reward of eternal glory doth abundantly recompense all our disgraces. If the cross giveth us a title to the crown, we have no reason to grudge at it. Therefore let us patiently suffer present ignominy and contempt ; count yourselves rather bound to praise God that you are thought worthy of the world's hatred. Alas ! what is man's day to Christ's day ? 1 Cor. iv. 3, 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment,' or man's day, *ἀπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας*.

[3.] Improve it to holiness. See that this work be begun, for heaven is but the perfection of what is begun in this life ; and when it is begun, never give over till you attain this perfect estate. The more eminency in holiness you get, the more glorious you are. And you have this encouragement, that Christ will prosecute his work till he hath brought it to this effect. Christ will make his people at last without spot or wrinkle ; ere all be done it shall be so. We are not faultless, but Christ will not rest till we are faultless, if he see you use the means carefully.

[4.] Improve it to the love of God's people ; a necessary lesson in these days, when they fly from others that are in trouble, as the rest of the herd from the wounded deer : Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord ;' Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight ;' Ps. cxix. 63, 'I am a companion of them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts ;' Heb. x. 33, 'Partly while ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions ;

and partly while ye became companions of them that were so used.' We must not measure the glory of the people of God by the judgment of sense or bodily eyes, for it is spiritual and future ; it lieth not in pomp, but holiness ; and this holiness is perfect at the last day.

[5.] Improve it to thankfulness to Christ ; for we have all our holiness from Christ ; from first to last, he is the author and finisher ; he purchased and procured the Spirit of sanctification for us : Titus iii. 5, 6, ' According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' And also this glorious estate ; he gave himself not only to sanctify his people, but glorify them. Heaven is the fruit of his blood and love : Rev. i. 5, ' Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' First he purchased it for us, and then communicateth it to us.

END OF VOL. XIX.











